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Three Wise Fools

A Comedy in Three Acts
by Austin Strong

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WINCHELL SMITH and JOHN L. GOLDEN

Present

"Three Wise Fools"

A Comedy

By Austin Strong.

Produced at the Criterion Theatre, Thursday Evening, October 31st, 1918.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

MR. THEODORE FINDLEY.....Claude Gillingwater
DR. RICHARD GAUNT.....Harry Davenport
HON. JAMES TRUMBULL.....William Ingersoll
MISS FAIRCHILD.....Helen Menken
MRS. SAUNDERS.....Phyllis Rankin
GORDON SCHUYLER.....Charles Laite
BENJAMIN SURATT.....Stephen Colby
JOHN CRAWSHAY.....Charles B. Wells
POOLE.....Hayward Ginn
GRAY.....Harry H. Forsman
CLANCY.....Levitt James
DOUGLAS.....J. Moy Bennett
POLICEMAN.....George Spelvin

ACT I.

The Living Room in the Home of Three Wise Fools, Washington Square, New York City.

ACT II.

Four weeks later.

ACT III.

Half an hour later.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

HON. JAMES TRUMBULL, Justice of the Federal Court.
MR. THEODORE FINDLEY, of Findley & Co., Bankers.
DR. RICHARD GAUNT, of the Rockfeller Institute.
MISS FAIRCHILD.
MRS. BOYD.
GORDON FINDLEYN.
BENJAMIN SURATT.
POOLE.
GRAY.
CLANCEY.
DOUGLAS.

ACT I.

The Living Room in the Home of Three Wise Fools, Washington Square, New York City.

ACT II.

Four weeks later.

ACT III.

Two hours later.

ACT ONE.

SCENE—The living room in an old house on North Washington Square. A distinguished room—distinguished in its simplicity. The room is richly but discreetly furnished, showing rare restraint and good taste. What few things there are reflect knowledge and breeding.

The furniture is well worn by honourable use—early Victorian and very complete.

Double mahogany sliding doors center—leading to a spacious dining room rear.

Door rear R. leads into the front hall—where we get a glimpse of a fine old cabinet and portrait.

Window R. with heavy brocaded curtains.

Stairway at L. rear—first landing leading to library door—the stairway then turns to R. and leads up to second landing where a door faces audience leading to the upper hall.

Fireplace L.—between fireplace and stairway—a door leading to the servants' quarters.

Sofa before fireplace—small horsehair settee in front of table.

Behind sofa round mahogany table on which is an old fashioned globe lamp with hanging crystals. Telephone, magazines and evening papers are also on this table.

Card table center.

Armchair L. Small table with another glass globe lamp.

Between hall door and dining room—a small cabinet full of books—an old family album.

A grandfather's clock stands at foot of stairs and ticks their lives away.

A bell cord hangs L. of the double doors.

DISCOVERED—The curtain rises disclosing THEODORE FINDLEY, the senior partner of Findley & Co., Bankers, seated at the small green-covered card table in the center of the stage, facing front. He is strong, powerful, with a fine head of white hair.

He is laying out a game of patience from a double pack of miniature playing cards, with the same deliberation he has laid out his life and affairs. He is whistling as he plays an old fashioned tune.

DR. RICHARD GAUNT, the brain specialist and member of the Rockfeller Institute, is seated on the sofa extreme L., before the fire reading a medical journal. His back is towards Findley and he sits in a circle of light from the standing lamp. He also is of late middle age—thin, distinguished, polished. He has all the grace, poise and repose of manner which comes with the mastery of his profession. He has the surgeon's hands, beautiful in line and strength. He wears the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor in his buttonhole. Both are in snowy linen, as they always dress for dinner, even when they dine alone—which is the rule.

(Findley whistles his ancient tune, as GRAY enters L., picks up the telephone from round table L. of C., speaking as he does so.)

GRAY—Mr. Findley.*(Findley glares at him over his glasses)*—One of the men from your office wants to talk to you on the telephone.

FINDLEY—*(Whistles for some time, then speaks)*—I've gone to bed.

GRAY—*(In telephone)*—Hello! Mr. Findley has gone out for the evening, sir!—*(Exits L. closing door softly after him.)*

FINDLEY—*(Looking up from his game of patience finds his cigar unlighted. Looks for matches on table—then under it—fusses about.)*—I say, Dick, have you seen the matches?—*(Frowns at Dr. Gaunt who pays no attention—then in a loud voice)*—I say—have you seen the matches?—*(Doctor says nothing—Findley nods assent as if he'd been answered)*—Aha!—*(Fumbles about helplessly)*—I had them here somewhere?—*(Dr. Gaunt hears nothing, engrossed in his journal. Findley searches among his pockets, looks under the table knitting his massive brows in thought)*—Now! I could have sworn I laid those matches right here on the—er—on the—er—*(Lays his hand down on the corner of the table and right on the matches. Gives a sheepish glance at the Doctor and lights his cigar—slamming down the matches.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Sighs with obvious satisfaction over paper)*—A—ah—good!

FINDLEY—*(Cigar between his teeth—as he continues his game)*—What's the matter with you?

DR. GAUNT—*(As he reads)*—Oh, nothing—at least nothing YOU could understand!

FINDLEY—*(Growling)*—I think I can understand anything YOU can understand!

DR. GAUNT—Hardly, I'm reading from a medical journal!

FINDLEY—Umph! I should think after cutting people up all day and lecturing about their brains the LAST thing you'd want to read would be a medical journal.

DR. GAUNT—*(With a smile)*—On the contrary.—*(Turning to Findley)*—I confess to enjoying myself immoderately.—*(Turns back to his reading with pardonable pride)*—Er—I'm reading one of my own ARTICLES!—*(Pause)*—I call it the Unburied Dead.

FINDLEY—The Unburied Dead.

DR. GAUNT—The "Unburied Dead" or "A Physco-Analysis of Mental Grooves! and I contend—*(MRS. SAUNDERS enters D. L.)*

FINDLEY—*(With a shrug)*—I don't want to hear any more.

DR. GAUNT—*(To himself)*—All right!—*(They continue as before. Mrs. Saunders stands at a respectful distance on Findley's left. He continues his whistling. Then looks up at her—annoyed)*—What is it, Saunders?

SAUNDERS—*(Calmly, with a calmness born of many years)*—The silver lists, sir—*(Hands him small red book—he takes it and throws it down wearily)*—The weekly accounts—*(Hands him a small black book—he takes it with a savage frown.)*

FINDLEY—I'll look them over later.

MRS. SAUNDERS—Yes, sir.—*(She starts to go L.—he stops her.)*

FINDLEY—Saunders.

SAUNDERS—*(Coming back)*—Yes, sir.

FINDLEY—Has the corn-meal from the farm run out?

MRS. SAUNDERS—No, sir.

FINDLEY—Then why didn't the cook give us Johnny cakes for breakfast this morning?

MRS. SAUNDERS—I thought you'd like a change, Mr. Findley!

FINDLEY—*(Turning on her)*—Saunders, how many times have I got to tell you that we don't like change in this house. We are three men of settled habits—we don't want innovations—*(Picks up cards)*—I am the house-

keeper here—not you! You have my complete list of the meals?—*(Resumes game.)*

MRS. SAUNDERS—*(Calmly—for she goes through this every evening of her life)*—Yes, sir.

FINDLEY—*(Plays and smokes savagely)*—Then stick to them!

MRS. SAUNDERS—*(Long pause)*—Is that all—Mr. Findley?

FINDLEY—No—that's not all—*(turns in his chair—glaring at her)*—The next time you engage a servant, Saunders, don't go to a lunatic asylum!—*(Dr. listens and smiles as he reads)*—That new maid is a dumb-head!

MRS. SAUNDERS—*(Shocked)*—Mr. Findley!

FINDLEY—*(Roaring at her)*—What does she do with my bed slippers?

MRS. SAUNDERS—I don't know, sir.

FINDLEY—*(Turning again at her—loud in wrath)* Well, I can tell you—*(Dr. turns and listens)*—what she does with them. She hides them—*(Dr. smiles)*—She hides them on purpose! I had to crawl under the bed on my hands and knees this morning for ten minutes, and then I didn't find 'em!—*(Dr. chuckles)*—I had to go to the bath-room barefooted.—*(Dr. laughs. Findley turns on him)*—BAREFOOTED!—*(Findley fairly shouts this at the Doctor)*—Saunders, I won't stand for it—give her a good calling down—fine her—discipline her—*(Doctor turns front and listens)*—give it to her hot!

DR. GAUNT—Oh, come she'll never be any good.—*(Rises, goes up to R. of Saunders and gives her a confidential wink)*—Saunders you better have done with her, on the spot and discharge her.

MRS. SAUNDERS—*(Wearily)*—Just as you say, gentlemen!—*(Looks at Dr. and seeing his wink, smiles.)*

FINDLEY—*(Grumbling—shamefacedly—Dr. turns again to Saunders and smiles—she smiles back at him)*—No—no—no—don't discharge her! It'll only mean we'll get a worse one. Bad as she is I've got used to her.

DR. GAUNT—Oh, you better not have her around.

FINDLEY—*(Snarling up again)*—Not have her around? Why that girl supports her mother! What's the matter with you Dick—you haven't any heart—*(Sternly)* That'll do, Saunders!

MRS. SAUNDERS—Yes, sir!—*(Exit Saunders L.)*

(Dr. watches Findley then goes to the round table L.)

(Gray enters through sliding doors from the dining room C.—after Findley whistles. Dr. compares his watch with the grandfather's clock—noting exact time of Gray's entrance.)

(GRAY carries silver tray on which are a small carafe of water, a medicine bottle, a measured medicine glass, and a glass spoon. He places this on small serving table to R. of Findley, Dr. turns, watching Gray. Exit Gray C. Findley looks at Gray bringing on medicine then takes out watch —glares rear at Gray and then lays watch on table—continues game. Dr. watches this with quiet amusement. Findley gives an occasional glance at the minute hand. The Doctor watches and a thought strikes him. He tiptoes up L., back of Findley to the table and quietly steals the glass spoon—returning to fireplace L. above sofa.)

(FINDLEY again examines his watch. Is satisfied the fatal moment has arrived, snaps it shut, puts it back in his pocket, whistles, shakes bottle, carefully holds up measuring glass and with infinite care pours in the medicine—to the exact mark. He then adds water from the carafe and feels for the spoon.)

FINDLEY—*(With a growl)*—Umph!—*(Looks about the table—then on floor)*—What in the name of____*(Dr. laughs and rises during Findley's speech crosses to L. of him laying his journal on the round table as he passes it)*—What's come over the servants in this house—that fool Gray has forgotten the spoon—the spoon! Of all the amazing idiots!

DR. GAUNT—*(Calmly producing the spoon—and handing it to Findley)*—Here's your spoon! I took it!

FINDLEY—*(Turning on him amazed—glaring at him over his glasses)*—You took it—what for?

DR. GAUNT—To prove a point in my thesis here on the "Unburied Dead!"—*(Indicates magazines on table and laughs)*—Teddy—you're one of 'em!

FINDLEY—What?

DR. GAUNT—For two years at exactly 8.45—government time—your right hand has reached for that spoon! *(Findley starts to drink)*—For two years at 8.46 you have swallowed that medicine—*(Then Findley drinks)*—and for two years it hasn't done you the least bit of good!

FINDLEY—*(Splutters over his drink half swallowed)* Well, you prescribed it:

DR. GAUNT—Two years ago.

FINDLEY—*(After an anxious look at bottle)*—Oh! Then you advise my changing the prescription?

DR. GAUNT—*(Oratorically)*—I advise our changing our whole mode of existence—the entire machinery of our lives! I've suddenly come to the grave realization that you and I and the Judge are in mortal danger! Teddy, don't you see the awful significance of that spoon! Because it was not in its proper place—the top of your head was in imminent danger of exploding!

FINDLEY—What's the matter with you tonight, Dick—you're queer!

DR. GAUNT—No, Teddy—we three are queer. We're deep in grooves—we're chained by habits, harnessed by custom. We're knee-deep in ruts—while flowered meadows beckon us on every hand! Ha, ha—*(Walks L. a little way laughing)*—Ruts! Teddy, ruts!

FINDLEY—*(Frowning. Card poised in air)*—Ruts!

DR. GAUNT—*(Turning—returns)*—Yes—grooves—tracks—paths—trails—don't you understand?

FINDLEY—Not a damn word and neither do you!—*(Resumes game.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Laughing)*—Now listen, Teddy you play solitaire after dinner every night—you swallow your medicine and drink your two cups of coffee with gruesome regularity. Promptly at 10.30 we have our apples and hot water and go to bed. You want to murder a maid, because your bed slippers were not in their accustomed habitat—and you growl if Johnny cakes don't appear for breakfast every Thursday morning!

FINDLEY—*(Sharply)*—How about you this morning when your eggs were too soft.

DR. GAUNT—*(Gaily)*—Of course, I'm as bad as you are—we're both, the Judge too—all three of us are in the class I have named here.—*(Turns L. picks up magazine from round table)*—"The Unburied Dead."—*(Movement from Findley)*—Oh! my God—I've only touched the idea in this article. Now I realize that I've stumbled on a great discovery.—*(Crosses L.—to fireplace and smokes—reads)* Dr. Osler nearly had it when he advocated chloroforming all men over forty.

FINDLEY—Now you'd chloroform us—would you?

DR. GAUNT—Well—that's not necessary.

FINDLEY—Good.

DR. GAUNT—Because we're already dead.—*(Enter Gray from C. with two coffee cups and pot—places one cup of coffee on table L. picks up other cup walks back of Doctor and Findley places cup on table R. of Findley.)*

FINDLEY—Now look here____!

DR. GAUNT—*(Turning to Findley)*—Yes, sir—dead as mutton—we have ceased—we have stopped—*(Puts magazine on table crosses to Findley)*—the wheels of our machinery are still revolving, but only on the momentum of the past. We're resting on our achievements—we're living on what we have done and not what we are going to do. And worst of all—we're satisfied—*(Dr. has returned to fireplace.)*

FINDLEY—My God, Dick, how you do love to talk. *(Gray takes medicine from small table R. of Findley.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Doctor turns toward mantle—looking in fire as Gray starts toward door C.)*

FINDLEY—*(Peering round the saucer)*—Where's the sugar, Gray?

GRAY—*(Sadly)*—In the saucer, Mr. Findley, as it always is.—*(Exits C.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Crossing Center gaily)*—There you have it! As it always is! Gray has sounded our dreary slogan—Ha, ha, ha!—*(Puts down pipe and picks up coffee cup where Gray left it on table—stirs coffee, puts sugar in coffee and sits in settee front of table)*—Teddy, there's a way out! Science has proved conclusively, thanks to Carrel, that cellular tissue can live on indefinitely; but it's our negative emotions which destroy us. Now if we could be trained to supply the sympathetic system with a high order of tonic emotion—there is no reason why the human family should not live on forever!—*(Drinks coffee.)*

FINDLEY—*(Drinking his coffee at the same time)*—Forever—eh—I thought you said we were dead!

DR. GAUNT—*(Sipping his coffee)*—Exactly—we need to be galvanized into life—throw off our chains, climb out of our ruts and roll among the buttercups!—*(Drinks to the last drop.)*

FINDLEY—*(Puts down coffee on serving table—kindly)*—"Roll among the buttercups," don't you think it's time you went to bed, Dick?—*(Returns to his game.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Shaking his head with a smile. Puts down cup back of him on table)*—No, all we need is inspiration. Something "to stab our spirits wide awake! We

need youth—color—danger—excitement—revolution—pain will do—or riotous sin!

FINDLEY—*(Stops card in air)*—Sin—*(Turns on him)*—Now for the FIRST time you interest me!—*Leaning back in his armchair)*—What would you suggest?

DR. GAUNT—Well, I'm rather vague about such matters, but I can imagine something wicked—*(Dr. rises)* Champagne, champagne out of a satin slipper—*(Goes to Findley)*—something red-headed!—*(Kisses his fingers to the air.)*

FINDLEY—*(Dryly)*—You flatter yourself.

(Gray enters from L.—again picking up the telephone.)

FINDLEY—*(Snarling)*—What is it Gray?

GRAY—*(Holding telephone toward him)*—Mr. Gordon on the telephone, sir.

DR. GAUNT—Oh, Gordon.—*(Crossing to L. of round table.)*

GRAY—He wants to know if he can see you tonight?

FINDLEY—I've gone to bed.

DR. GAUNT—*(Picking up his journal)*—You mean to say you won't see Gordon?

FINDLEY—I will not. I found a fine position for him yesterday, the chance of a lifetime! Wired him to be in my office this morning—and this is the first time, I've heard from him. See him tonight, I should say not.—*(Gray starts to speak in phone.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Quietly going to Gray)*—Gray let me have that, please.—*(Telephoning cheerfully—Gray gets cup from table goes C.—takes small table from R. of Findley—Exits C. with table.*—Hello, Gordon, no, this is Dr. Gaunt, yes, he's here—come right over. Your uncle will be delighted to see you.

FINDLEY—*(Really angry)*—Now look here you—

DR. GAUNT—*(Puts phone on table crossing to Findley. Interrupting him)*—Listen Teddy—you'll lose that boy if you're not careful. That was an olive branch—accept it—use a little tact!

FINDLEY—*(Returning to his game)*—Tact be damned—what he needs is a club.

DR. GAUNT—Pon my word—it's astonishing what idiots you successful men really are! Here you are one of the richest men in the country, a power among men—yet, when it comes to simple human wisdom—you're a pitiful jackass, Teddy!—*(Starts down L.)*

FINDLEY—Thank you!

DR. GAUNT—*(Turning to Findley with back to audience)*—Well, look at you—here's your sister's boy—the only bit of flesh and blood left you in the world. The very apple of your eye—and what do you do—nag and persecute the boy morning, noon and night!

FINDLEY—I guess I know how to treat my own nephew!

DR. GAUNT—*(Going to Findley)*—A little encouragement—a little affection would go a long way with him!

FINDLEY—He's got too much money!

DR. GAUNT—*(Laughs)*—Well that's not his fault!

FINDLEY—Everyone spoils him but me—because he's rich doesn't mean that he's going to escape work. I've got a job for him—*(Gray enters from R.)*—he may wear a silk sweater—but I'm going to see that he sweats!—*(Gray comes down R. with a card on a silver tray.)*

GRAY—Beg pardon sir—a detective sir!—*(Both start slightly. Findley looks first at Gray in surprise, and then at Gaunt.)*

FINDLEY—A what!

DR. GAUNT—A detective?—*(Dr. Gaunt crosses to Gray picks up card donning his glasses)*—J. Poole, Police Headquarters!

FINDLEY—*(Tartly)*—Here let me see that?—*(Takes card from Gaunt and reads growling)*—J. Poole, Police Headquarters!

DR. GAUNT—Oh, he probably wants to see Judge Trumbull—something to do with the Court, I dare say!

GRAY—No, sir, he says he particularly wanted to see only Dr. Gaunt and you, Mr. Findlay.—*Dr. Gaunt looks at Findley.)*

FINDLEY—*(Puzzled)*—Me?

DR. GAUNT—*(Laughs)*—Well, this is very interesting—show him in, Gray!—*(Crosses to L. front of round table.)*

GRAY—Yes, sir.—*(Exits Gray R.)*

FINDLEY—*(Examining the card)*—What does a detective want with us?

DR. GAUNT—I don't know—*(Laughing—sits on settee)*—My conscience is clear!

FINDLEY—Umph!

DR. GAUNT—*(Looking front)*—A detective is charged with possibilities—*(Looks at Findley)*—already

he's doing you good! A missing spoon—disturbed your sympathetic centres and now that mere piece of cardboard has thrown your entire involuntary system into a mad seething tumult of molecular vibrations.—*(Takes handkerchief polishes glasses. Gray opens door R.)*

FINDLEY—Oh! for Heaven sakes—Dick!—*(Gray ushering in Mr. Poole, a quick, expressionless man, neatly dressed—Gray stays in the room lingeringly eyeing Mr. Poole. Mr. Poole comes down stage to R.C. towards the two men. They watch him curiously. A short pause.)*

POOLE—*(Bowing)*—Mr. Findley!

FINDLEY—*(Leaning back)*—How do you know my name's Findley?

POOLE—*(With a meek smile)*—I guess we know every financier in town, sir.

FINDLEY—*(Sourly)*—You must have a vast acquaintance.

POOLE—*(Steps down R. a little)*—There are not many in your class, Mr. Findley! It's a great honor to meet you too, Dr. Gaunt.

DR. GAUNT—*(Laughing—as he polishes his glasses)* And so you've detected me too?

POOLE—Yes, doctor? We all know of your great work at the Rockerfeller Institute and your discovery of—

FINDLEY—*(Interrupting him)*—Well—er—er——*(Picks up card)*—Mr. Poole, what is your business?

POOLE—(*Glances at Gray*)—What I've got to say is private. (*Turns and looks at Gray. Findley turns with a questioning look to the doctor, who indicates Gray with a slight gesture of his glasses*).

FINDLEY—(*Understanding*)—Oh! That will do, Gray!

GRAY—(*Disappointed*)—Yes, sir.—(*Exits door R*).

POOLE—Your butler tells me Judge Trumbull has not come home yet.

DR. GAUNT—No—he is usually detained at Court on Thursdays. Did you call to see him?

POOLE—No, that's just it. I DON'T want to see him. Commissioner Cornell asked me to try and see you gentlemen ALONE. You don't expect him in for a few minutes, do you?

FINDLEY—May I ask what the devil this is all about?

POOLE—The Commissioner sent me here to tell you gentlemen—that—(*in a lower tone*)—pardon me a moment!

(Goes up to door R.—opens and looks out to see no one is eavesdropping).

FINDLEY—(*To Doctor*)—What the . . .

POOLE—(*returning quietly*)—That we are watching this house.

DR. GAUNT—Eh?

FINDLEY—(*In surprise*)—What's that? (*Dr. rises going to L. of Findley.)*

POOLE—The orders are to watch this house day and night.

FINDLEY—Watch this house—what for?

POOLE—"Benny the Duck" has escaped!

FINDLEY—Benny, the what?

POOLE—"Benny the Duck" sir—don't you remember him?

FINDLEY—(*To Dr. Gaunt, angrily*)—Do you know what he is talking about, Dick—Now why should I remember "Benny the Duck"?

POOLE—Why it was a very famous case, sir—tried before Judge Trumbull. "Beny the Duck" alias Benjamin Surratt.

DR. GAUNT—Oh yes—I think I remember now—he—he was a forger wasn't he?

POOLE—Yes sir, he broke out of Atlanta prison two weeks ago, taking with him, John Crawshay—the bank embezzler.

FINDLEY—(*Surprised*)—Crawshay—John Crawshay—I knew him well—went to college with him.

POOLE—There's a big reward out for him, sir. The strange part of the case sir, is the friendship between the two men—for some reason, we can't make out. When Benny broke jail—he took Crawshay with him. Now that's very unusual—considering the type of the two men.

FINDLEY—(*Interrupting him tartly*)—Without desiring to appear abrupt, Mr. Poole, may I ask what all this has to do with placing a guard around our house?

POOLE—Why, Benny, has sworn to kill Judge Trumbull on sight, sir. (*They both start—Findley rises stands back of table C.*)

DR. GAUNT—(*Under his breath*)—Heavens!

FINDLEY—Good God!

POOLE—You see sir, Judge Trumbull sentenced him—gave him twenty years and Benny swore the moment he'd get out he'd get him!

FINDLEY—And you say this Benny is in New York now?

POOLE—Yes, sir.

FINDLEY—(*anxiously*)—Great Scott, we'd better warn the Judge at once—what's the number of the——

DR. GAUNT—(*hurriedly*)—I'll get it Teddy——

POOLE—That's not necessary, gentlemen. One of our best men is watching every movement of Judge Trumbull—and I can assure you he's in no danger so long as he doesn't find out we're protecting him.

FINDLEY—(*Still standing*)—Why the devil should he find out!

POOLE—If you remember the last time the Judge was attacked was because he objected to personal guards—if he knew about this the Commissioner's afraid he wouldn't allow it. (*Dr. and Findley exchange significant glances. The doctor nods*).

POOLE—So I hope I can depend upon you gentlemen to say nothing to Judge Trumbull, also you'll not let the servants know—the house is being watched.

DR. GAUNT—(*Goes to L. C. Rings bell cord for servant—then crosses R., looks out window—curiously—deeply interested*)—We will be discretion itself, Mr. Poole!

POOLE—Thank you! (*Gives Findley a police whistle*)—Oh! you had better keep this police whistle near you at night, in case you should want us in a hurry, just blow on it twice!—(*Stops himself as Gray appears*)—I think that's all gentlemen!—good evening. (*Goes to door R. C.*)—Good evening. (*Exit, followed by Gray*).

DR. GAUNT—Good evening. (*Rubbing his chin—comes down, sits arm chair R.*)—This is a queer business, Teddy—(*Laughs to himself*).

FINDLEY—(*Attaching the police whistle to his gold key chain, sits)*—Yes, I'm afraid for Jimmy. I think we ought to tell him!

DR. GAUNT—Nonsense—we've had this fellow's assurance that Jimmy's in no personal danger.

FINDLEY—Well I don't like it—makes me feel creeps! (*Shudders*).

DR. GAUNT—(*Laughingly*)—Good—then Benny the Duck's a godsend! He could coax you out of a lot of ruts! "Benny the Duck"—you know I'm beginning to like that fellow—He may be hiding in this house this very minute!

FINDLEY—(*Looking around behind himself*)—What's that?

DR. GAUNT—He could easily mistake your room for the Judge's!

FINDLEY—My room!!

DR. GAUNT—(*Gaily*)—Imagine how it would seem. Headlines in the morning papers with a diagram of the house with crosses marked to show where your body was dragged!

FINDLEY—(*Furious—turning with a roar*)—Will you dry up?

DR. GAUNT—(*Laughs, sits wiping his glasses and his eyes*).

FINDLEY—(*Looks about gingerly. The keys drop accidentally out of his hands with a loud noise, he gives a violent start—continues his game—then leans back*)—You know that's funny though about Crawshay—I always liked that fellow. He went South after he left college—and got into trouble down there. I never could believe that man was guilty! Never!—(*Door slams off stage R. U. E.—Starts, spilling cards*)—What's that! (*Dr. Gaunt rises, starts up to door R.*)

DR. GAUNT—Benny the Duck of course. (*Laughs*).

FINDLEY—Be careful, Dick—don't go out there—don't take any chances—where's that whistle? (*He looks about for it while all the while it is hanging in plain view on the end of his chain. He leaps to his feet as the door bangs open—ENTER GORDON*).

GORDON—(*A clean cut young modern—what is called a regular fellow—in doorway*)—Hello, folks!

DR. GAUNT—Ah it's your prodigal! (*Goes down R. chair L. of small table R.*)

FINDLEY—(*Sourly*)—Umph!

GORDON—(*Gaily*)—I though I'd just drift in!—(*Goes to window R., looks out*).

FINDLEY—(*Putting keys in pocket—then he sits—with sarcasm*)—Drift—yes, that's the word for you!

GORDON—(*Crosses to R. of Findley—cheerfully*)—Uncle what's the matter around here—are you running a gambling house?

FINDLEY—What the devil do you mean?

GORDON—Why, as I came in I thought I saw a sleuth standing in the areaway and when I was stopped on the

steps and was given the "once over" by a little man in a gray overcoat I was sure they were Pinkertons!

DR. GAUNT—The house is being watched, Gordon! (*Findley starts new game*).

GORDON—(*Takes a step towards the Doctor at R.*)—Great Scott. (*Comes back to Findley*)—Uncle, what have you been doing?

FINDLEY—Umph!

GORDON—(*Returning to the doctor*)—What's up, Doctor?

DR. GAUNT—Why—it seems that a dangerous criminal has escaped from prison and has threatened the life of Judge Trumbull!

GORDON—(*Concerned*)—No?

DR. GAUNT—(*Rising and crossing to L.*)—But we're told there's no cause for alarm—they're on the fellow's trail and the Judge is being closely guarded, but he mustn't know anything about this—they're afraid if he does he will put a stop to it! (*Picks up evening paper and settles into the sofa before the fire and reads.*)

GORDON—Well this IS thrilling!

FINDLEY—(*Testily*)—It's all attended to—all you've got to do is to remember to keep your mouth shut and say nothing to anybody! Now, what brought you here?

GORDON—(*Turning to Findley*)—Your telegram!

FINDLEY—You're twelve hours too late!

GORDON—Why, I didn't get it, sir.

FINDLEY—How did you know I sent you a telegram if you didn't get it?

GORDON—*(Controls his temper and speaks quietly)* I mean, I didn't get it in time!

FINDLEY—*(Growling)*—Why don't you say what you mean.

GORDON—I'm afraid I will in a minute. I found it when I got home this afternoon—it was sent to my old rooms.

FINDLEY—*(Settles back in chair, stops playing)*—Oh! So you've got new ones now. The old ones weren't luxurious enough, I suppose.

GORDON—I don't know about that, sir.—*(Turning front)*—I know they weren't big enough for our parties!

FINDLEY—*(Hotly)*—I'll be damned if I'll ever be a guardian again. Here I've got to manage your finances; pay you your income—you're of age and I've no control

over you and you can squander your life away and I can't say anything! If I had you in my office I'd break your back!

GORDON—*(Hotly)*—Don't you call that saying something!

FINDLEY—Where were you yesterday?

GORDON—Out of town, sir. *(Their voices mount almost in a quarrel)*

FINDLEY — *(Sneeringly)*— Something important, I dare say!

GORDON—It was, yes, sir.

DR. GAUNT—*(Speaking over his shoulder with a sly diplomacy)*—Ah, yes—congratulations Gordon—I see here your team won! They've got your name in the head lines.

FINDLEY—Huh!—*(Rises goes over to Dr. Looks over his shoulder reading—turns smiling—stops as he sees Gordon looking at him. Makes a sour grunt and returns C.)* Huh! More of that confounded polo?—*(Sits.)*

GORDON—No, I've quit polo!

FINDLEY—*(Taking up his game again)*—Thank heaven!

GORDON—Until next season—now really uncles this was important. The felows wired me to come up to college and help whip the football team into shape for the final game.

FINDLEY—Well, I wired you to come to my office.

GORDON—I told you, sir, I didn't get it in time.

FINDLEY—*(Producing an official looking envelope from a black wallet)*—You give this letter to Mr. Schermanhorn in the Rapid Transit Department tomorrow morning and tell him you've come to work.—*(Hands him letter)*—Here!

GORDON—*(Looks at letter and retreats a step)*—You said I could have a six months' vacation if I got my degree.

FINDLEY—I only made that fool offer because I thought you had too much decency to accept it. What's come over you? Are you going to stay an idler all your life—the trouble with you is you lack discipline, character, backbone!

GORDON—*(Ruefully)*—I don't think I do!

FINDLEY—*(Turning on him)*—Then why didn't you answer my telegram?

GORDON—Because I didn't get it in time.

FINDLEY—I don't believe you.

GORDON—*(Striding to him hotly)*—Now look here, Uncle—I've never lied to you.

FINDLEY—*(Rise—in a loud tone)*—All right the job's still open—will you take it?—*(Holding out envelope comes a little way toward Gordon.)*

GORDON—No, sir!

FINDLEY—You won't?

GORDON—*(With all his force)*—When I get ready to take a job—I'll take it—but I won't be shoved into it.

FINDLEY—*(Throwing envelope down)*—Er—ah—umph! Oh! Where the hell are the matches.

GORDON—*(Picks up matches gives them to Findley. Grimly)*—Here, sir.

FINDLEY—*(Curtly)*—Thank you.—*(Sits C. back of table.)*

GORDON—Now you say I don't do anything—why I've coached the best team the college ever had—

FINDLEY—*(Removing cigar from mouth)*—That's play—not work!

GORDON—You try it, sir!

FINDLEY—True education is in learning to do the thing you don't want to do at the time you don't want to do it . . . a real man has got to know what it means to get down on his ham bones and sweat and you'll never amount to anything until you can stand up on your two hind legs and say no with conviction and go to hell and mean it!

GORDON—*(Hotly)*—That's just what I am saying.

FINDLEY—*(Turning as in his chair)*—You mean you're saying that to me?

GORDON—Yes, I'm doing what you WANT ME TO DO and you don't like it! I'm saying no with conviction—and—all the rest of it.

FINDLEY—*(About to rise)*—Why, you—

GORDON—*(Staying him by his attitude)*—Now you're angry because I don't see things your way!

FINDLEY—*(Pushing his chair back)*—Well, how do you see it—will you tell me that?

GORDON—Well—I—I've figured it out this way—

FINDLEY—*(Almost singing his sarcasm. Crossing his legs—swinging a foot)*—Oh, he's figured it out!

GORDON—Why should I work and slave to acumulate more of what I've got too much of already.—*(Findley grunts)*—I can never spend the money I've got if I live to

be a hundred. You and I have no right to work, Uncle—why we're keeping jobs from people who need 'em.

FINDLEY—*(In real disgust—collapsing in his chair)* Oh, my God!—*(See Doctor laughing to himself.)*

GORDON—Now if I could find some work I liked—something that wouldn't bring in any money you know—I'd be glad to work—hard.—*(Dotor rises goes up L. and comes L. of Findley.)*

DR. GAUNT—Now—Teddy—don't you see—*(Warming him silent.)*

FINDLEY—*(White with rage)*—All right! Allright! Allright! All right. He's said enough! I take my oath—*(Puts letter back in wallet, then in his pocket)*—You'll never hear from me again! I've done my best—now I'm through. In the future you can do anything you damn please.

GORDON—*(Hotly)*—And I certainly will!

FINDLEY—*(Roaring)*—Now get out!!—*(Gordon shocked to his senses—stands a moment watching him. A pause—both relent—Findley continues solitaire. Gordon stands irresolute looking at him shyly.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Who has been quietly watching these two, has wandered down L. of Findley and has been pretending to watch his game, gently leaning over and points to card with a smile)*—Teddy, one doesn't put a red tray on a black queen!

FINDLEY—*(Changing it)*—Umph!—*(Gordon turns quickly and goes to window—picks up coat and hat and starts for door—Findley in pantomime shows his regret—he is longing to call the boy back. He sits still, a card poised in air—all ears—and watching Gordon out of the corner of his eye. Gordon returns—Findley pretends to continue his game. Gordon stands beside him.)*

GORDON—I—I'm going now, Uncle—*(Holds out hand. Findley pays no attention—continues game.)*—Shall—shall we shake hands first!

FINDLEY—*(Ashamed to relent—gives Gordon a short shake with the tips of his fingers and pretends to continue his game. Gordon goes to door—Findlay would give anything to call him back but is ashamed to. Dr. Gaunt stops Gordon.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Carelessly)*—Gordon—won't you stay awhile and talk with me?

GORDON—*(Pauses irresolutely)*—I—I'd like to, Doctor, if Uncle wouldn't object?—*(Both look at Findley who continues playing.)*

DR. GAUNT—Object—why nonsense—This is my house also—*(Realizing that Findley isn't going to speak says quickly)*—Your uncle only represents a one third interest in this establishment.

GORDON—But if he doesn't want me here.

DR. GAUNT—Doesn't want you here, Gordon—It may interest you to know, that if you took your uncle at his word and left us—it would break his heart. So come back here and sit down!—*(Taking away his hat and coat which he puts in chair near window. Gordon pushes chair down stage and sits. Findley promptly swings chair so its back is to Gordon. He also turns the table around. Gordon—rises in anger. But the Doctor speaks and stops him from going. Pushing him down in his seat. Gordon looks over at his uncle.)*

DR. GAUNT—I've got something here, I want to show you—*(Goes to cabinet L. of door R. and brings down an old family album. Findley glances over at him—and at the Doctor. Pretends to play.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Up stage)*—Gordon, you don't understand your uncle.—*(Takes album from bookcase)*—He's only afraid you're going to waste your life. But I'm not. *(Comes down R. of Gordon.)*

GORDON—Well, you're different—you're a man of sense!—*(Gives a meaning look at Findley—Findley half glances at him.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Looking at Findley)*—Thank you! I have complete faith in you—*(Takes chair from R. sits close beside Gordon R.)*—Few men dare stand up to that profane old wolf.—*(Nods at Findley)*—as you do—that's something to your credit!—*(Pause—unfastening buckles on album)*—Gordon, do you see that cold piece of human clay sitting over there?—*(Gordon nods but doesn't look)*—Take a good look at him. For there you sit forty years from now.—*(Gordon looks at Findley.)*

DR. GAUNT—At your age, he was exactly like you—only wilder!

GORDON—Wilder!

DR. GAUNT—Yes, and as a phsyco analyst I can tell you that forty years from now you will have the same habits—the same body and face and temper and be settled in

the same ruts as that terrible result of a well ordered life —sitting over there stewing in his own iniquity!—*(Opens album on his knees)*—If you don't believe me—here's documentary evidence—*(Gives Gordon album)*—a photograph of the three of us taken at your age!—*(Pointing to each picture)*—Your uncle, Judge Trumbull and myself.

GORDON—*(Gordon bursts out laughing—Dr. looks at him)*—I beg your pardon. It's awfully good really.—*(Gordon again bursts out laughing.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Seriously)*—Don't you notice a resemblance to your uncle there and yourself.

GORDON—*(Laughing ruefully)*—Oh! come now doctor!

DR. GAUNT—Yes, you're a chip of that old block.

GORDON—*(Suddenly interested—pointing in book)* Doctor, what's that thing?

DR. GAUNT—*(Bending over to see)*—What thing?

GORDON—There!

DR. GAUNT—Where?—*(Putting on glasses.)*

GORDON—On Uncle's head!

DR. GAUNT—*(Looking at album gravely)*—That's his hat!—*(Puts glasses away.)*

GORDON—Oh!—*(Examining)*—Why what's written here—Athos—Porthos—Aramis!

DR. GAUNT—*(Leaning back in chair proudly)*—The three musketeers.

GORDON—You three?—*(Looks at Dr. then at Findley—then at picture—then front smothering another laugh.).)*

DR. GAUNT—Yes.—*(Looking out front.)*

GORDON—*(Turning over another page)*—I say who's the peach?

DR. GAUNT—*(Rises—looks at Findley then at Gordon turns away to window)*—Rena Fairchild.

GORDON—She's a pippin—Doctor!—*(Takes chair puts it below window R. Turns pages)*—Why here are some more pictures of her—why the whole book's full of her.—*(Loks up at Dr. Gaunt.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Turns looks at Gordon then at Findley and back at Gordon. Quietly)*—Gordon—have you ever been in love?

GORDON—*(Looking at pictures carelessly)*—Oh—hundreds of times!

DR. GAUNT—*(Smiles)*—Hundreds—H'm! That's

interesting—and yet in all your twenty odd years you never thought of marriage?

GORDON—*(Looks at Findley)*—Oh! I've never been seriously in love.

DR. GAUNT—Well—we have.

GORDON—We?

DR. GAUNT—Yes, your uncle, Judge Trumbull and I.

GORDON—*(Looking at Dr.)*—Oh! the three musketeers?

DR. GAUNT—*(Nods)*—Yes, and all with the same girl.—*(Indicates the picture.)*

GORDON—*(Looks at Dr., then at Findley, then at album)*—One for all and all for one, eh? Weren't there enough girls to go 'round in your day?

DR. GAUNT—Not like Rena.—*(Pause)*—Gordon, the original of these pictures was the cause of our first meeting.

GORDON—*(Looking at picture)*—Not really.

DR. GAUNT—*(Nods)*—We all admired her, all fell desperately in love with her. It was at her house we three met for the first time—all hated rivals.

GORDON—And she turned you down.

DR. GAUNT—*(Surprised)*—How did you know that!

GORDON—Why—er—look Doctor, could you blame her!—*(Holds up the album at the picture of the three musketeers. Dr. returns the album to cabinet rear—Findley looks angry at this. The Doctor is quite grave. Gordon sobers in an instant. To Doctor in a low and humble voice)*—I beg your pardon—*(Rises)*—I didn't mean to make fun I shouldn't have laughed.

DR. GAUNT—*(At bookcase)*—Why not—laugh away! I don't blame you, Gordon.—*(Coming down R. of Findley)* You're not the first who has laughed at us. Anyone who had not lived our story would think it absurd—comic—*(Looks at Findley)*—We were never much at being ladies men and I suppose our one experience cured us of matrimony—*(To Findley)*—or perhaps we were just born bachelors.

GORDON—Well—what became of her.—*(Crossing to L. of Doctor.)*

DR. GAUNT—We never knew—*(Crossing down L.)* she disappeared completely out of our lives—*(Looks at picture over mantle L. then goes to it.*—Sometimes the world can be a large place!

GORDON—*(Looking front)*—Yes—that's right.—*(Embarrassed—looks at Findley)*—I guess I'd better be going,—I—*(Crosses up R. of door R.—get coat and hat.)*

GRAY—The Judge is home, Mr. Findley.—*(Moves chair back of table C. up to L. or arch C.—takes card table goes out door up R. after Judge enters. Gordon places hat and coat in chair Gray has moved up L. of C.)*

DR. AND FINDLEY—*(Findley crosses front of table L.)*—Oh! Jimmy—*(As he enters)*—Oh! Jimmy! Hello, Jimmy.

JUDGE—*(Taking off gloves and coat his hat still on)* I'm glad you're both home, boys—I've been wanting to see you all day.

GORDON—*(Coming R. of Judge)*—Good evening, Judge.—*(Findley and the Dr. exchange glances.)*

JUDGE—Ah, Gordon—er—Gordon—would you mind leaving me alone with your unle and the Doctor for a minute!

GORDON—Why, I was just going anyway, sir.

JUDGE—Oh—No—No. Don't run away.—*(Enter Gray comes R. of Judge)*—Just step into the library for just a minute, like a good fellow.

GORDON—Why, certainly, sir.—*(Goes off into library door up L. B.)*

GRAY—*(As Judge is about to speak to Dr. and Findley)*—There's been a woman here to see you, she's called twice this afternoon.—*(Removing hat and giving coat to Gray.)*

JUDGE—*(Pause)*—Oh! That poor woman again—

FINDLEY—What woman?

JUDGE—She wants to plead for her wretched husband! I sentenced him last week—well let her in if she comes.

GRAY—Yes, sir.—*(Exit up R. judge goes to C. rather gravely.)*

FINDLEY—*(Coming around back of Judge and to R. of him. Nervously.)*—Jimmy, you're not yourself tonight—something's happened!

JUDGE—*(Grimly)*—Yes!

FINDLEY—Oh! Then you know about the—

JUDGE—*(Surprised—looking from one to the other)* Why—did you?

DR. GAUNT—Yes.

JUDGE—*(To Dr.)*—Oh! Then the boy is here?

FINDLEY—*(Surprised)*—Boy?

JUDGE—*(Gravely)*—Ah—then you don't know.

FINDLEY—What is it, Jimmy?

JUDGE—*(Puts hands on their shoulders)*—Boys, she's dead.

FINDLEY—Rena!

DR. GAUNT—Rena!

JUDGE—She died—in abject poverty—*(Cross to L. and sits on stool front of table—moved)*—alone!

DR. GAUNT—*(Deeply moved—shaking his head)*—What a life—what a tragedy!—*(Cross up L.C.)*

JUDGE—It seems she'd married and had a child! Here is how the news—*(Findley goes up gets chair sits L.C.—Doctor sits on table behind them)*—reached me on an old piece of wrapping paper, written in pencil.—*(Adjusts glasses. Reads very slowly)*—Althos—Perthos—Aramis—old friends!—*(Reminiscent—looks slowly at each of them)* I am dying, I blame no one but myself. I am in no position to help my child—so I turn to you three, the best, the most chivalrous men I have ever known to ask for help. If you will do this for me, I will rest in peace; and if there is a great beyond, I will pray for you always. For the sake of the old days, help and forgive in your hearts, yours in despair, Rena!''—*(Dr. rises and goes up L.C. and then down L. round sofa.)*

FINDLEY—What is it she wants us to do Jimmy?

JUDGE—There's a will.—*(Dr. sits on settee arm)*—I, Rena Fairchild, hereby say that this is my last will and testament. I do not know if this is legal, as I have no one to advise me, but I solemnly bequeath to my three old friends. Theodore Findley, Richard Gaunt and James Trumbull in equal shares the only thing I have in the world—my beloved child, Sidney.—(Signed) Rena Fairchild.

FINDLEY—You mean to say that we've been left a boy?

JUDGE—We have. Rena turned to us in the end—after all these years!—*(Dr. takes papers from Judge.)*

FINDLEY—Well—can one be left a child like an old farm or old furniture or silver—

JUDGE—A nice point of law—I'm not so sure it mightn't furnish grounds for our becoming his legal guardians.

DR. GAUNT—*(Who has been examining papers)*—I doubt if we ever see this child!

JUDGE—Nonsense!

DR. GAUNT—Why these are dated three months ago. *(Returns papers to Judge.)*

JUDGE—Exactly but the fact that the letter was mailed last night—indicates they intend to send the boy here to us—*(Folds up letter—puts it in envelope)*—Well—boys—what do you say?

DR. GAUNT—Rena's child—why—there's no question. We must do everything in the world for him.—*(Both look at Findley.)*

FINDLEY—Yes. We must give him everything that money CAN buy!

JUDGE—*(Rises)*—I knew you'd feel that way, boys!—*(Goes to C. going between Findley and tableL.)*—Teddy, you'd better tell Mrs. Saunders we'll use the Blue Room for the Nursery!

DR. GAUNT—*(Laughing)*—Ha! Ha! Good!

FINDLEY—*(Dismayed—in horror)*—My God—you're not going to have him in the house?

DR. GAUNT—Why not?

FINDLEY—Why not—oh come now—talk sense—I am willing to do as much as either of you fellows—more for that matter—but—*(Rises)*—surely we don't want a noisy messy youngster upsetting our lives—changing the order of things here!—*(Goes C. Judge goes R. front of table R.)*

DR. GAUNT—Changing the order of things!—*(Clapping his hands)*—Splendid! That's just what we need—*(Rises—crossing to Findley)*—and Teddy it will get you out of a lot of these—

FINDLEY—Damn ruts—*(Dr. and Judge laugh)*—will you please stop that noise for a minute and talk sense. We don't want the boy here—in the house. Now that's the way I feel about it.

GORDON—*(Knock on door.)*

JUDGE—Come in.

GORDON—*(Coming down stairs and to Judge who is R.)*—Excuse me, but that's the longest minute I ever met—I feel like Rip Van Winkle!

JUDGE—Gordon—I beg your pardon—I quite forgot you!

GORDON—Oh don't mind me—I just didn't want to miss my youth; that's all.

DR. GAUNT—*(Laughing, X. in to C. to Findley, between Gordon and Findley)*—Boys suppose we let Gordon decide for us!

FINDLEY—Bosch!—*(Judge X. into Dr., between Gordon and Dr.)*

JUDGE—I agree with Dick—

DR. GAUNT—*(Turning to Findley)*—Yes—and if Gordon goes against you—Teddy—you lose!

JUDGE—Gordon, an old friend of ours—a dear friend has left us an infant boy to take care of. Now we want you to help our decision!

DR. GAUNT—*(Findley goes L. rear, picks up evening paper)*—It's Rena's child, Gordon.

GORDON—You mean?—*(Looks over at album in cabinet.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Significantly)*—Yes! Your uncle Teddy is against our bringing the boy into the house.

GORDON—*(emphatically)*—Then I'm for it!—*(Dr. and Judge laugh.)*

FINDLEY—Of course you would be!—*(Slamming down the newspaper in fury—goes up L. then down C. between Dr. and Judge.)*—All right! Since he won't take the job I've offered—I suggest we make over our shares in the will and turn the child over to Gordon.

GORDON—Oh, I say!

JUDGE—Why not?

DR. GAUNT—Right!—*(Gordon laughs—Gray enters—stand R. of Gordon.)*

GRAY—Beg pardon, sir! That woman is here again.

JUDGE—Oh, yes—*(With a sigh)*—Well, I suppose I shall have to see her!—*(Nods to Gray, who retires up to door R. opens door, waits at L. of door R.)*

FINDLEY—For Heaven's sake! don't bring her in here. I hate scenes.

JUDGE—Then why don't you go into the library?—*(Turns L. and works up to mantle—looking into the fire—Dr. returns to table and picks up journal. Gordon goes to window idly looking out.)*

FINDLEY—Why don't you go into the library yourself?

JUDGE—All right—*(Goes up to Findley.—A young girl enters—she stares at Gray and comes into the room—overcome by the strangeness of the place. She is shabby and down at the heel. She mistakes the Dr. for the Judge*

and comes to him—a very beautiful and appealing figure.)

SIDNEY—Good evening.—*(Judge comes down C. to R. of Sidney.)*

DR. GAUNT—How do you do?

SIDNEY—Are you Judge Trumbull.

JUDGE—*(Coming up behind her R.)*—I am Judge Trumbull.—*(Shakes his head which stops her talking—Gently—with authority)*—I am very sorry my poor girl—deeply sorry—but I can do nothing for you—sentence has been passed!

SIDNEY—Then it's no use?—*(Starts up C. stops. Dr. sits with his back to C.)*

JUDGE—Sometimes its true kindness to be stern! I can do nothing for your husband—he is in the hands of the Federal Law.

SIDNEY—Husband—I have no husband!—*(Findley and Dr. turn and look at her.)*

JUDGE—*(With a start—Gordon stares at her—comes above table R.)*—What is this? Didn't you come to plead his cause?

SIDNEY—No, sir—I came about a will—*(Doctor stands and looks up)*—Didn't you receive a will.

JUDGE—Mrs. Fairchild's will?

SIDNEY—Yes, sir.

JUDGE—Oh then the boy's in your charge—where is he?

SIDNEY—*(Puzzled)*—Boy?

JUDGE—Yes—where is this Sidney Fairchild?

SIDNEY—*(With dignity)*—I am Sidney Fairchild! *(Dr. rises puts magazine on table—Findley crosses back of table and R. of it.—All astonished—start.)*

FINDLEY—*(Puzzled—scratching his head)*—What then you're not a boy?

SIDNEY—*(Wistfully. To Findley.)*—No, sir—*(Did* you want a boy?

FINDLEY—*(Emphatically)*—We certainly did not—but we were expecting an infant.—*(Goes up L.—to fireplace.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Crossing to Sidney. Gently.)*—You see we'd forgotten we had all grown old.

JUDGE—But why didn't you come to us before, Sidney.

SIDNEY—I only reached New York last night.

JUDGE—But your mother's letter—was written three months ago.

SIDNEY—I didn't want to send that at all. I only used it now in the hope that you would consent to see me. I—well—I'm trying to study law, Judge Trumbull.—*(The Dr. and Judge look at each other.)*

JUDGE—*(Smiling)*—Oh—are you really?

SIDNEY—Yes, and I thought—that is I hoped there might be some kind of work I could do for you.

JUDGE—Work? There's no question of work—you've been willed to us.

SIDNEY—But the will isn't legal; I couldn't make mother understand—

JUDGE—Have no fear, your mother was right. It is the soundest of all law. Why it's what makes the world go round.

SIDNEY—But I must keep on with my studying, I must somehow—

JUDGE—Well, in that case you may consider yourself engaged.

SIDNEY—Then there is something I an do for you?

JUDGE—We'll go into that very carefully later. In the meantime this is your home and welcome.

DR. GAUNT—*(Taking her hands)*—Welcome.—*(A pause—as all look at Findley—he swallows his disgust at the thought of a girl in the home.)*

FINDLEY—*(Sourly)*—Welcome!—*(Goes rear, bored and upset—takes out watch compares it with clock. Gordon starts down R. crosses to C. stands facing Sidney.)*

SIDNEY—*(Eyes full)*—You mean—you mean—you want me to live here—that you want me to—*(Turns and sees Gordon, who has dropped down R. of C.—there is a pause—and he goes to her.)*

GORDON—Miss Fairchild—it doesn't make the slightest difference whether they want you or not, they've made over the will to me, I'm your guardian. It's quite all right.

FINDLEY—Oh, keep quiet.

Get away.

DR. GAUNT—Gordon, don't be silly. *(All together.)*

JUDGE—*(To Sidney)*—Go away, Gordon—of course we want you.

SIDNEY—Oh! you're all so dear—*(Sways, Gaunt catches her.)*

GORDON—Look out, she's fainting—*(Ad lib.)*

DR. GAUNT—Here—Gordon—a chair.—*(Goes up left of C. gets chair quickly, brings it down C.—the Judge and Dr. catch her and put her in the chair Gordon has brought down—Judge runs across R. and opens the window and parts the curtains.)*

SIDNEY—Oh, I'm allright, thanks.—*(Findley goes up L.C. pulls bell.)*

FINDLEY—*(As Gray enters from door right—in in bored voice)*—Get Saunders!—*(Gray exits L.)*

SIDNEY—Oh, please don't trouble. Please don't!

DR. GAUNT—There, there, dear—there's nothing to be alarmed about, only you're all tired out, and you need a good rest.

FINDLEY—*(Bored—Coming into C.)*—Can I do anything?.

GORDON—*(Turning to him)*—Yes, sir, you can give me that letter.

FINDLEY—What?—*(Produces wallet—takes out letter and hands it to Gordon.)*

GORDON—To Mr. Rapid Transit Department—I'll be at his office to-morrow morning by eleven o'clock if I have to sit up all night to make it. I've got responsibilities now!

DR. GAUNT—Oh! Gordon, keep quiet.—*(Gordon goes up C.)*—I'm Dr. Gaunt, Sidney.

SIDNEY—*(Softly)*—Oh, you are Aramis.

DR. GAUNT—*(Delighted—laughing)*—Well. Ha—ha—ha—*(laugh delightfully)*—Yes, and this is Mr. Findley.

SIDNEY—*(Looking up at him)*—Porthos!

DR. GAUNT—Yes, and the Judge was Athos!

SIDNEY—Yes.

GORDON—*(Coming down R. of Sidney)*—And now I'm going to join the group—just all me D'Artagan!—*(All chase him back C.L.)*

FINDLEY—Just a moment now.

DR. GAUNT—Now Sidney—your doctor—*(Enter Gray from L. crosses to door up R.)*—has strict orders for you. Are you willing to obey them?

SIDNEY—Yes, sir!

DR. GAUNT—Very well—then not another word tonight—*(Enter Saunders from L. comes down R. of round table)*—You need a good rest and I prescribe bed in large doses.

SAUNDERS—Did you want me, sir?

DR. GAUNT—Oh, yes, Saunders. Saunders this is Miss Sidney Fairchild. She's going to live with us.—*(Gray looks surprised and exits R. Saunders looks at Findley quite amazed—taking a half step backward.)*

SAUNDERS—Yes, sir, very happy, Miss, I'm sure.

SIDNEY—*(Smiles at her)*—Thank you.

DR. GAUNT—Now Saunders.

SAUNDERS—Yes, sir.

DR. GAUNT—Miss Sidney's very tired—*(Takes hat from table, hands it to Saunders)*—take her up to the blue room and see that she's made very comfortable.

SAUNDERS—Come with me, Miss.—*(Sidney rises.)*

JUDGE—*(Extending his arms to her)*—Good night, Sidney.—*(Kisses her on forehead—Gray enters from up R. gives Saunders two bags—exits C.)*

SIDNEY—Good night, sir.

DR. GAUNT—Good night, Sidney.—*(She goes to him and he kisses her on the forehead—then remembering Findley—turns and looks at him—he regards her with embarrassment.)*

SIDNEY—*(Going to him, slowly)*—Good night, Mr. Findley.—*(He looks at her—glances sheepishly at the others—who smile behind their hands. This settles him—he then stoops over and kisses her awkwardly on lips—she looks up into his face and smiles.)*

FINDLEY—*(Sincerely and deeply moved—bowing repeatedly and shyly)*—Good night—Sidney.—*(She turns to stairs again.)*

GORDON—*(Goes to her suddenly)*—Good night, Sidney—*(He waits as if expecting her to put up her face to be kissed—Sidney looks at him embarrassed.)*

SIDNEY—Good night.—*(Turns away.)*

SAUNDERS—Come dear—*(Leads way upstairs.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(When Sidney's on the first landing)*—And Saunders—after you've tucked Miss Sidney in, you may give her an apple and a cup of hot water, just as Gray gives us.—*(Saunders starts second flight.)*—Yes, sir.

GORDON—*(Turning to Doctor)*—Apple and hot water—why not hot chocolate?

DR. GAUNT—No—no. Too rich, but she may have a cup of hot cocoa, if she prefers it.

GORDON—*(To Saunders)*—With whipped cream, Saunders.

DR. GAUNT—No. With hot milk, Saunders.

SAUNDERS—Yes, sir.—*(Starts upstairs.)*

DR. GAUNT—Oh and Saunders—she is not to talk to you—that is very important.

SAUNDERS—Yes, sir—*(To Sidney)*—Now you come right along dear, and Saunders will—

FINDLEY—*(Crossing from R. to L. front of table)*—And Saunders you're not to talk to her—that's more important.—*(Saunders goes out—Sidney—turns—stops at the top of stairs and looks at them a moment.)*

SIDNEY — Good night!—

(Turns and goes out.)

FINDLEY—Good night dear!

DR. GAUNT—A good night's sleep.

JUDGE—Good night child!

DR. GAUNT—Good night sweet dreams! Now go right to bed.

(All together at foot of stairs waving at her.)

FINDLEY — *(Warming)*—Have a good sleep!

DR. GAUNT—Good night, Sidney.—*(They all turn—chuckling and laughing—Findley rather foolish.)*

JUDGE—*(Taking chair from R. of table L. down stage)*—Well, let's talk this over.—*(Gordon comes down C.)*

DR. GAUNT—This is amazing—*(Come down sits on stool front of table. Gordon gets hat and coat from L. of C.)*—it's happened so suddenly I'm quite dazed.

FINDLEY—*(Sits in chair C.)*—Yes—you can't help liking the little thing somehow.

JUDGE—Now we must settle upon some plan of action!

GORDON—Yes—*(Front)*—that's the thing for us to do!

FINDLEY—*(Turning on him)*—You'll find Mr. Schermahorn in his office at 9 o'clock.

GORDON—I'll be there.

FINDLEY—Well go home and go to bed so you'll be awake when you get there.

GORDON—*(Going to door up R.)*—you're right, uncle.

FINDLEY—What?

GORDON—You can't help liking this little thing somehow!—*(Exits door up R.)*

JUDGE—Now this meeting can come to order.

FINDLEY—Yes, we must think what's to be done.

DR. GAUNT—Yes. Now, the very first thing you got to do Teddy, is to eliminate all vile language.

FINDLEY—You mean to insinuate that I'm in the habit of using bad language.—*(Warning for clock on bell.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Amazed)*—Good gracious don't you know you do?

JUDGE—*(Equally amazed)*—Yes, Teddy—don't you know you do?

FINDLEY—*(Looking from one to the other)*—Well, I'll change it.

DR. GAUNT—*(Anxiously)*—Do you think you can, Teddy?

FINDLEY—Do I think I can. Of course I can—why the hell—why shouldn't I?

JUDGE—Now for the next point—*(Clock—bell booms once—the half hour—Douglas opens door. Gray enters from dining room with apples and hot water on tray.)*

GRAY—It's bedtime, gentlemen!—*(They all winding their watches together gravely. Crosses to window and closes it.)*—Your apples and hot water.

JUDGE—This meeting is adjourned until breakfast—*(Rise puts chair L. of door C.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Rises)*—Why I had no idea it was so late.—*(Takes cup and apple goes to foot of stairs.)*

FINDLEY—*(Rises)*—Where has the time gone to?—*(Goes to table gets apples and water)*—I know I won't sleep a damn wink.

DR. GAUNT—*(Turning at foot of stairs)*—Teddy!—*(Judge turns at looks at him.)*

FINDLEY—Well, she didn't hear me. What the hell's the difference!

DR. GAUNT—Good night Gray—*(Upstairs—and out library door. Turns looks at door then at Judge and Findley and exit.)*

GRAY—Good night, sir.—*(Closing curtains.)*

FINDLEY—*(Pauses on landing looking upstairs back to audience.)*—Good night, Gray!

GRAY—Good night, sir.—*(Puts out first lamp.)*

JUDGE—*(Goes up stairs—Gray switches out lights at switch up L.C.)*—Good night, Gray—*(Exit Judge leaving door open.)*

GRAY—Good night, sir.—*(Gray puts out lamp leaving room in darkness but for the light from library door.)*

GRAY—*(Going up the stairs—wagging his head bewilderedly—to himself.)*—My! My! My!

VERY SLOW CURTAIN.

ACT II.

TIME—Four weeks later.

The room is transformed as if by magic.

It has grown younger.

Spring has taken possession. Every bowl and vase is bursting with flowers—in pots and bowls.

Douglas takes vase over to window R., comes back to R.C. goes up R.C. They have changed the room into a garden. The only change in the furniture is a new acquisition in the shape of a small writing desk center—rear, on which is a line of law books and a typewriter. The dainty Sheritan table has been placed in the center of the room; four places are set and four champagne glasses wait upon a tray.

A small settee is now at R. instead of table and armchair.

As the Curtain rises all the flowers are in place but one or two pots. DOUGLAS and MRS. SAUNDERS are scurrying like mad placing them about.

SAUNDERS who is C. goes up L.

DOUGLAS—Where does this go?—*(Holding a pot of flowers in his hands.)*

SAUNDERS—*(Consulting a paper on which is a diagram)*—Oh lord—what did he say? Oh there on Miss Sidney's desk.

DOUGLAS—There, is that all?

SAUNDERS—Yes, I think that's the way he wants it. I suppose the safest way would be for you to go to the dining room and ask him to come and see if everything's all right.—*(He starts for the double doors.)*—Not that way. Go by the hall and be terribly careful when you speak to him that Miss Sidney doesn't suspect anything—if she should find out before they want her to—they'd murder us.

DOUGLAS—Yes—I will.

SAUNDERS—That's right, Douglas.—*(Exit quickly.)*

MRS. SAUNDERS—*(Who is down C. suddenly sees something placed wrong—gives a "Oh!" of horror and consults her paper. Runs to mantle-piece, takes down a huge pot of beauty roses and places them on library table. Then studies paper again)*—Now that's all right!—*(Door*

bursts open rear and Findley enters carrying napkin; now in full evening dress—flushed—pink—gay—blustering.)

FINDLEY—What the devil do you want Saunders?

SAUNDERS—Why, I thought sir—

FINDLEY—Didn't I make you a complete diagram?

SAUNDERS—Yes.—*(Showing diagram)*—Here it is.

FINDLEY—*(Coming down front)*—Well, you've got your diagram, why the h—why don't you go by your diagram.—*(Seeing flowers at right.)*—That's all right—that's fine—*(turns and sees flowers on table L.)*—and that is beautiful Saunders—really that is perfectly beautiful.—*(turns and sees flower pot on Sidney's desk)*—But that is rotten.—*(places diagram on table and going to Sidney's desk.)*—That's not a bit like it.—*(He lifts up the pot from Sidney's desk, and crossing to small stand at L. of arch.)* This thing doesn't go up here—this thing comes down and goes over here and this thing—*(takes pot off stand L.)*—comes down off this arrangement and goes over there on Miss Sidney's desk. Confound it—I go to the trouble of making you a complete diagram and then you proceed to ball everything up.—*(Crosses and places the new pot on Sidney's desk.)*

SAUNDERS—But it says the hydrangers there sir.—*(Points to Sidney's desk.)*

FINDLEY—*(Glaring at flowers on Sidney's desk.)*—Are those hydrangers?

SAUNDERS—Yes, sir.

FINDLEY—Then why the devil didn't you say so before I—Now go over there and get the damn things and bring them over here where they belong.—*(Grabs pot from Sidney's desk, crossing stage, places them on table left as Saunders takes pot from table L. and replaces it on Sidney's desk.)*

FINDLEY—You want me to do everything?—*(Suddenly looking at the center table.)*—Now where's the cake, Gray—*(Douglas opens door for Gray who enters door R. with cake.)*

GRAY—Here it is sir.—*(A birthday cake with one lone candle.)*

FINDLEY—Well, will you put it in the center of the table there?—*(Gray does so.)*—And will you light that candle? We're ready for the coffee now.

GRAY—*(Lighting candle on cake.)*—We're all ready.

FINDLEY—*(admiring the flowers on large table left)* Saunders, these are beautiful—really they are exquisite and these here—*(turning to mantlepiece)*—are perfectly wonderful.—*Dances from the room like a happy gazelle.*

MRS. SAUNDERS—Will you look at that, why they've all gone crazy.—*(Enters Douglas, door R. with wine glasses and decanter on tray, crosses down center and places same o ntable.)*

GRAY—I don't mind it so much, Mrs. Saunders.—*(Arranges table at C.)*—But I can't understand it, after all these years of peace. It's a revelation.

MRS. SAUNDERS—It's a revolution, Mr. Grey. That's what it is!

GRAY—Well have it your own way.

DOUGLAS—*(Crossing up to door center.)*—They're all ready.—*(Gray follows him up. Douglas on R., Gray on L., both open doors and exit.)*

JUDGE—We shouldn't laught at her, boys, this is a serious matter.—*(Sidney and the Three Wise Men are seen seated around a table in an exquisite Adams dining room; they have finished their dinner, waiting for coffee. Sidney is seated at the C. with back to audience. Findley on her left, Dr. on the R. and the Judge back Centre. Sidney is now beautifully gowned in shell pink, she is hardly recognizable; she is transformed. Mrs. Saunders exits left 2nd entrance.)*

JUDGE—Now Sidney in the case United States vs. Moss, what do you think would have happened if Latimer hadn't testified?

SIDNEY—I think that Moss would have been acquitted.

DR. GAUNT—*(Placing down napkin)*—Oh, do drop law for a little while, Sidney.

FINDLEY—Listen dear, you have us at a disadvantage; we want our coffee, but we can't leave the table until you do.

SIDNEY—*(Putting down napkin and rising)*—I beg your pardon. I suppose when I begin asking question then —*(She comes in room and sees all the decorations, she sees that room is decorated in her honor, a pause)*—Why! What is it?—*(Looks all about)*—What does it mean?—*(Comes down stage. Three Wise Men follow her to door, standing a step above and observing Sidney.)*

FINDLEY—*(Sentimentally)*—Can't you guess?

SIDNEY—No, all the ones that I liked best at the flower show this afternoon. It's like a garden.

JUDGE—*(Placing chair at left of table for Sidney.)* Madame—

FINDLEY—Be seated.—*(They make much ado about seating Sidney.)*

JUDGE—*(Indicating chair.)*—By me.

DR. GAUNT—Well, I guess I can sit close to her too. *(Sits on Sidney's left. Findley runs around the table and tries to sit on the Judge's chair, but the judge is before him he then draws a chair up R. of table and sits opposite her.)*

JUDGE—Now this is a festival in your honour.

SIDNEY—My honour.

DR. GAUNT—Yes, this is your birthday.—*(Draws chair near Sidney.)*

SIDNEY—Birthday?—*(Looking surprised.)*

FINDLEY—Yes, you have been here exactly one month today, so we are celebrating.

DR. GAUNT—Yes, madame, this is your luna-versary.

JUDGE—Hence the lunatics. Before you descended from above upon us we were quite normal and I may say useful citizens, but now we have become three sentimental maniacs.

DR. GAUNT—You know it is being borne in on me with a painful realization the truth of that ancient platitude, "there are no fools like old fools."—*(All laugh.)*

SIDNEY—But you're not old. Really, you're not.

JUDGE—Up boys!—*(All three rise)*—Madame, we are dust at your feet.—*(They bow as one man with courtly grace and resume their seats.)*—I propose a toast to our young godsend—

DR. GAUNT AND FINDLEY—Bravo! Speech! Speech!

JUDGE—Speaking for your financial manager on your right, your court physician on your left, I, as you legal advisor, thank you in their names and my own, for that you have done for us—*(Applause)*—as for me, madame—I am reborn. Our quack is a living proof of his own philosophy and see how you've humanized that ancient fossil there—*(points to Findley)*—See the colour and sparkle in his face. Our eminent phycologist has proven his theory beyond the shadow of a doubt that we needed youth and inspiration to haul us out of our ruts.

FINDLEY—Ruts, with your permission, Mr. Toastmaster—

JUDGE—But I—

FINDLEY—*(Rising)*—Or without it—

JUDGE—*(Sits)*—All right.

FINDLEY—I would like to say a word on the subject of ruts.—*(Applause.)*—A month ago our eminent phycologist told me I was dead, but they hadn't buried me yet. He said I was a mass of ruts, but if I had enough excitement and tonic emotion and buttercups and daisies I might live on forever. Naturally at the time I thought he was hopelessly insane. I now apologize to him publicly—I was a mass of ruts—I was dead and didn't know it but after taking his wonderful tonic emotions—*(Goes over and pats Sidney's shoulders)*—for four short weeks I now confidently expect to live on forever—and the next buttercup I find I'm going to roll among it.

DR. GAUNT—*(Rises)*—Your apology is accepted!—*(Bows.)*

JUDGE—*(Rises)*—And we realize we owe the great change to you! So having proved yourself capable as well as ornamental my friend on my right will now resign his position here as housekeeper, in favor of you.

FINDLEY—*(Rises)*—Right gladly.

DR. GAUNT—*(Rises, takes Sidney up)*—Here, here.

JUDGE—And will relinquish his office by presenting you with the keys of this house.—*(Dr. Gaunt passing Sidney over to Findley who is right C.)*

FINDLEY—And here they are.—*(Pulls out a bunch of keys on a metal ring from his pocket and drops them into her extended hand, among the keys is the police whistle.)*

SIDNEY—*(Taking keys, examining same)*—What a lot of them.

DR. GAUNT—Yes, and she hasn't an idea which is which.

SIDNEY—Yes I have. Saunders has taken me all over the house, and shown me.—*(Sidney looking at police whistle)*—Why what's this?

FINDLEY—That's a police whistle.

SIDNEY—Oh—Oh dear—

FINDLEY—And I'll tell you what it's for. If that old chatter-box over there!—*(Pointing to Dr. Gaunt)*—ever tries to explain his theories of life to you, you are to

blow on this and the Judge and I will rush in and save you.—*(All laugh.)*

DR. GAUNT—Oh, really!—*(Sidney starts up to her desk to put keys in the drawer up R.C. between large folding doors and door R.)*

FINDLEY—Where are you going?

SIDNEY—*(Who is upstage)*—I'm going to put them in my desk. So I won't forget them.—*(Crosses back to chair left of table centre. Places keys in desk—crosses back to chair L. of table C. Findley, Dr. Gaunt and Judge cross to table C.—right, standing in oblique line.)*

DR. GAUNT—Now a toast to our new housekeeper!—*(The Three Wise Men each take a glass of wine that is already poured out and face Sidney.)*

JUDGE—*(Raising his glass and staying him with a gesture.)*—Sidney Fairchild, wishing you eternal youth.

FINDLEY—*(Raising his glass aloft)*—Long life.

DR. GAUNT—*(Raising his glass)*—And happiness—no heel taps.—*(All drink; after drink Judge crosses to chair C. behind table; Sidney is standing in front of her chair L.C. of table. Dr. Gaunt crosses to the side of Sidney, picks up cake knife from table C., handing her knife. Findley re-seats himself, R. of table C.)*—Now Sidney, the cake.—*(About to cut same.)*

FINDLEY—*(Stopping him, who is seated right of table centre; Judge C. of table; Sidney L. of Judge; Doctor extreme L.)*—Now before you cut the cake or blow out the candle. Tonight we are going to take you—You tell her, Jimmy—*(Slight pause—he leans back in his chair as she looks from one to the other.)*

DOCTOR—Oh, yes, you tell her.

JUDGE—*(Solemnly)*—We are taking you tonight to hear your first grand opera.

SIDNEY—*(Gasping)*—That is why you've given me this new gown.—*(Sidney places her hand carelessly upon table—Dr. Gaunt takes same patting it affectionately.)*

FINDLEY—Exactly, because you're going to sit in the front of the box.

SIDNEY—*(Puzzled)*—A box.

JUDGE—A box is a separate space partitioned off where we can all sit together comfortably.—*(Look at Doctor, who is holding Sidney's hand)*—And perhaps I may have my chance of holding your hand.

FINDLEY—Yes, that's right.—*(Rises, crossing Sidney in front of table C.—to L.)*—Now it's my turn to have my hand held.

DR. GAUNT—*(Who has been holding her hand throughout this scene.)*—No, no, I protest.—*(Waving Findley aside.)*—This is a question of my lady's preference.

FINDLEY—I stand on my rights. I appeal to the bench.—*(Indicating the Judge.)*

DR. GAUNT—Judge?

JUDGE—Dick you must obey the laws of equity, let go that hand.—*(Dr. does so. Findley in a very jovial manner raises Dr. from seat pushing him to the right taking Dr.'s seat at L. of table C.)*

DR. GAUNT—But what about your hand?

JUDGE—Never mind my hand.

DR. GAUNT—Wait till we get in the box.—*(All seated; Judge is holding Sidney's right hand; Findley holding her left—pause.)*

SIDNEY—Just we four are going?

DR. GAUNT—*(Gaily)*—Yes, just we four.

SIDNEY—*(Pause)*—Oh—

FINDLEY—*(Sharply)*—Here, what made you say that?

SIDNEY—Nothing—I thought there were more than four seats in a box.

DR. GAUNT—There are, but what of it? I suppose you want to invite the Cook, and Saunders and Douglas and Gray.

SIDNEY—*(Smiling)*—Now you're making fun of me again. I think its all too wonderful just as it is, only—

FINDLEY—Only—only what?

SIDNEY—I thought Gordon was coming to see you tonight.

FINDLEY—*(Rises, crossing to the left corner.)*—I knew it, I knew it.—*(As Findley leaves his chair Dr. rises quickly and stealing Findley's chair takes Sidney's hand. Findley sees this and tries to oust him out of the chair; general laugh from all.)*

JUDGE—Well, Gordon is not asked.—*(Dr. G. has noticed for the first time that Sidney is wearing her blue satin slippers.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(To Sidney)*—No indeed he isn't. Hello—why are you wearing your blue slippers?

SIDNEY—*(Surprised)*—There the only ones I have.

DR. GAUNT—Oh, no they're not. Grandpa Teddy and I ordered plain pink satin fellows to go with this dress.

SIDNEY—I haven't seen them.

DR. GAUNT—Oh, am sorry they haven't come in time. Never mind.

SIDNEY—But I love these buckles.—*(Enter Douglas L. C. entrance with tray containing trick coffee pot, pearl necklace in same—4 cups and saucers for serving on tray, crosses to centre back of table, places same between Judge and Sidney.)*

FINDLEY—We were assured by an extremely unpleasant young man that plain slippers were more the fashion for debutantes.

SIDNEY—But they'll never be noticed from a box.

DR. GAUNT—Ah! the coffee.

FINDLEY—Coffee! Coffee! Coffee!—*(Runs from L.—to R.—resuming his old position.)*

SIDNEY—Yes.—*(Takes up silver coffee pot and starts to pour tipping it slightly—no coffee comes—she turns and looks at Douglas.)*—Why Douglas there's none in it.

FINDLEY—*(Fairly wiggling with excitement)*—Keep at it.—*(Judge, Dr. and Findley eagerly watching expressions on Sidney's face—Sidney turns the pot upside down, cover falls opens and out drops pearl necklace on the table—she stares at it unable to speak, then lifts it up exclaiming "Oh"! Douglas takes coffee pot and tray exits center through sliding doors—returns immediately with a real coffee pot filled with hot coffee, crosses and places on table left, back of flowers. Sidney overcome starts crying silently.)*

FINDLEY—*(Rising)*—Handkerchiefs! Handkerchiefs!—*(All rise and crowd about her producing handkerchiefs. The Judge back of her, Findley R. and the Doctor L. They all give her their handkerchiefs—she takes the Doctor's and Judge's handkerchiefs and weeps on them.)*

FINDLEY—Here—what's the matter with mine?—*(Sidney gropes for it.)*

DR. GAUNT—I'm afraid we've sprung it on her too suddenly.

FINDLEY—Here you're not crying on mine at all.—*(She turns them all over and cries on his.)*

JUDGE—Nor mine.

DR. GAUNT—Nor mine.

SIDNEY—*(Bus. of handing handkerchief back to Findley.)*—Thank you!—*(Handing handkerchief to Judge)* Thank you!—*(Handing handkerchief to Dr.)*—Thank you!

FINDLEY—Here this is not mine.

DR. GAUNT—No, this isn't mine. Here Teddy—give me that one!

FINDLEY—*(Reaching for it from the doctor.)*—This is mine. This is the one she cried on last.—*(ad lib through scene until laugh dies.)*

SIDNEY—*(Drying her eyes manfully.)*—Please may I make a speech?

JUDGE, DOCTOR AND FINDLEY—Bravo! Hear, hear, speech!—*(Three applaud; she pauses, looking at them—they resume their seats, paying strict attention to what she is about to say; she looks at the jewels before, struggling manfully to hold back her tears.)*—You—you can never, realize it, but to me it's been like coming out of the hopeless dark into sunlight to have come here.—*(She falters and shivers—turning to them again)*—Mother told me you three were the most chivalrous men she'd ever known because it's in your hearts—*(They bow their heads; she pauses.)*—She was right. Why you haven't asked me a question—just taken me on trust. Oh if you could only know what that meant. I don't want pearl necklaces—*(Looks down at them)*—I just want to stay here with you for ever and ever and ever—*(She leans over and kisses Findley on the forehead—turns and kisses the doctor on the forehead, and crosses in front of table to Judge who is seated right of table C.—kisses him on forehead, climbing into the Judge's lap lays her head on his immaculate shirt front and sobs in his arms; the others drink their champagne and look extremely uncomfortable.)*

JUDGE—There, there—

SIDNEY—*(Inarticulately)*—Da—da da—boo—boo—

JUDGE—*(Softly as he pets her.)*—Of course, precisely.

SIDNEY—I didn't mean to do it.

JUDGE—*(Same business.)*—Quite right we all agree with you.—*(Suddenly Sidney realizes that she has been crying, tries to recover herself, drying her eyes and after a pause, which she forces laughter.)*

SIDNEY—Please forgive me. I couldn't help it. I just spilled over, didn't I?

ALL—Yes, yes, of course, of course.

(Rises—crosses in front of Findley who is center back of table. Findley grabs her in his arms and places her on his lap. Dr. G. takes necklace from table places it on Sidney's neck.)

SIDNEY—*(Brightning)*—Now may I see them?—

DR. GAUNT—Yes, of course, there they are.

SIDNEY—They're beautiful.

DR. GAUNT—Now let me put them on for you Sidney. There!—*(Fastens string of pearls on Sidney's neck. Judge takes cake knife, polishes it with his napkin and gives it to Sidney, who looks into it admiring the necklace.)*

SIDNEY—How alive they look.—*(Dr. G. goes left to table pours out cup of coffee.)*

FINDLEY—*(Who still has Sidney on his lap.)*—Yes, we were each going to buy you a separate present, but they wouldn't let me give you the best one. So to avoid friction I decided we'd make it a three in one gift.—*(Enter Gordon door R.)*

GORDON—Hello, folks.—*(Sidney rises, watching Gordon, goes down right of sofa R.)*

JUDGE—Hello, Gordon.

FINDLEY—*(Sourly)*—How did you get in here?

GORDON—*(Crosses to R.C.)*—With my new latchkey.

FINDLEY—Latch key? Where did you get it?

GORDON—Gray had it made for me.

FINDLEY—*(Crosses over to table left, pours out small cup of coffee, joins the doctor, who is at fireplace left.)*

JUDGE—*(Happily)*—Well, Gordon, you're in luck. Just in time for some cake.

GORDON—*(Looking at it.)*—For heaven's sake, what's happened here?

JUDGE—A birthday.

GORDON—Good. Many happy returns. Whose birthday is it?

FINDLEY—*(Who is in front of table left.)*—Sidney's you poor idiot.—*(Judge crosses to fireplace left.)*

GORDON—*(Delighted. Goes over to Sidney at right, taking small chair from table of center.)*—Sidney's? Then it's a real party.

SIDNEY—*(Looking at Gordon.)*—Look at my luna-present.—*(Shows pearl necklace on her.)*

GORDON—Oh, I say, they have come across. And so they should. Bully for them. I'm proud of them.—

(Sidney showing her pearls, both become unconscious of their surroundings.)

SIDNEY—*(In low voice)*—You haven't noticed my new dress.

GORDON—Oh, yes I have.

SIDNEY—*(Sits on settee right.)*—You didn't say anything.

GORDON—*(Sits in chair he has taken from table, he looks at her, up and down and then in her eyes.)*—I didn't think it was necessary. I thought you'd know what I felt. *(Sidney laughs, which attracts the attention of Findley, Judge and Doctor. Gordon whispers in her ear.)*

FINDLEY—*(At their exchange of glances.)*—Well, I'll be damned.

SIDNEY—Do you really like it as much as that?

GORDON—*(Nodding at her)*—Hah, ha.

JUDGE—*(Going up left over to right)*—There's something the matter with the bridge of my nose.

DR. GAUNT—*(Placing cup down on mantle; Findley does likewise; Judge placing his cup on tray, which is on table left.)*—Exactly.—*(Rubs nose.)*—A clear case of out of joint.—*(All three walk abreast, across stage behind Gordon; Findley grabs Gordon, pulls him away, forces him to extreme left of stage.)*

FINDLEY—Go away, Gordon, go away.—*(Judge takes Sidney, brings her to center.)*

JUDGE—You sit right down here and cut that cake. *(Enter Douglas through center door, goes to mantle, takes cups and saucers places them on tray and during action of scene exits center door, taking tray coffee, etc. with him. Dr. is on the right of table C.—Judge behind Sidney; Findley left of table C.)*

GORDON—Uncle, where were you this afternoon?

FINDLEY—*(Turning to Gordon)*—How's that?

GORDON—You got yourself in a fine mess.

FINDLEY—*(Icily. Crossing to L.C.)*—What do you mean?

GORDON—*(Grimly)*—Do you remember calling a directors' meeting this afternoon, at four o'clock?

FINDLEY—*(With a violent start.)*—Good God!

DR. GAUNT—Teddy!

SIDNEY—*(Rises)*—O—h—*(Sidney crosses to her writing desk, gets glass jar which is half full of coins, comes back to table centre, extending it toward Findley, he reau-*

izes that he has sworn, puts hand in pocket, takes out a quarter, crosses to Sidney, drops coin in glass jar—general laugh. Sidney with a look to indicate that she will stop his swearing, crosses back to her desk, placing jar on same, rejoins the Judge. Findley crosses back to Gordon.)

GORDON—I never saw an angrier bunch of men in my life.

FINDLEY—*(In real dismay)*—I forgot all about them. Gordon, what did you do?

GORDON—Well I had the proxy and I stalled them. But I had an awful job squaring you. Now where were you?

FINDLEY—*(Sheepishly)*—Er—er—ah—um—I had to take Sidney to see the flower show. It was the last day.

GORDON—Flower show? Listen uncle, true education is in learning to do the thing you don't want to do at the time you don't want to do it.

DR. GAUNT—*(Enthusiastically)*—That's right, Gordon, sic 'em, hit him again. He has no friends.

SIDNEY—*(Rising)*—Yes he has. Don't scold him, Gordon.—*(Crosses to fireplace and joins Gordon.)*—Have a piece of cake.

GORDON—*(Sputtering)*—Thanks. What use is he—*(Pantomime between Sidney and Gordon. Judge who is center of table with Findley and Doctor.)*

JUDGE—*(Sotto voice.)*—You'll make a business man of him yet.

FINDLEY—*(Sees Gordon in conversation with Sidney.)*—Look, Jimmy, look, he's at it again. He's at it again!

DR. GAUNT—Look, Jimmy.

JUDGE—*(Crosses to table left)*—Ahem! I beg your pardon—I don't want to interrupt you!—*(Aloud)*—Gordon eat your cake and go home!

GORDON—Home. Well, I like that. Why, what's up?

FINDLEY—We're going out this evening.

GORDON—Oh! Are we?

FINDLEY—No, we are.

GORDON—Well, where are WE going?

JUDGE—We are taking Sidney to hear her first grand opera.—*(Takes Sidney R.C.)*

GORDON—Poor girl. Grand opera. Why didn't you take her to a musical comedy? Never mind Sidney, I'll

help out all I can.—*(Crossing to Sidney.)*—I'll go with you.

FINDLEY—Young man, you're not asked.

GORDON—I know that, but I'll be there.—*(Cross to Findley C.)*—What's the number of the box?

FINDLEY—I'll not tell you.

GORDON—Well, I'll find it.

FINDLEY—*(Slapping Gordon on back and pushing him L. to mantle.)*—Run along now. We're in a hurry—we'll be late.—*(General laugh from all—Gordon crosses over to fireplace—Sidney is at extreme right; Findley has crossed to table left—Judge is center—Dr. between Findley and the Judge.)*

FINDLEY—We'd better get ready. We mustn't be late.

JUDGE—*(Crossing up left center)*—Plenty of time—*(Turns back to Sidney)*—But don't take too long, Sidney, dear.

SIDNEY—Why I'm quite ready.—*(Faces them.)*

DR. GAUNT—Remember this is an important occasion. Don't forget your gloves—the long ones.

SIDNEY—Oh, yes—

JUDGE—And the lorgnette—and your fan—that's important—ladies must always carry fans in a box.

FINDLEY—*(Crosses to table)*—Yes, so they may talk behind them during the heavy spots—Oh! and don't forget—the orchids we've got at the—

GORDON—Directors' meeting this afternoon.—*(All laugh. Crosses down quickly to mantle as Findley makes a motion as if to chastise him.)*

JUDGE—*(Looking at Sidney)*—Boys, it's like the old days.

DR. GAUNT—Porthos!—*(Extends hand.)*

FINDLEY—*(Extending hand)*—Athos!

JUDGE—*(Taking both of their hands)*—Aramis—

ALL—One for all and all for one.—*(Clasping hands.) (Forming line they exit singing the Soldiers' Chorus from "Faust." Exit upstairs into library which is door left 3E. A pause. Enter Gray from dining room center, arranging tray with glasses and decanter to take them away.)*

GRAY—Mrs. Saunders sent me to tell you your pink satin slippers have arrived.

SIDNEY—Thank you, Gray.

GRAY—She laid them on your dressing table, miss.—*(Puts chair up R.C. Sidney starts to run upstairs—Gordon intercepts her at foot of stairs.)*

GORDON—One moment, please. Gray, Miss Fairchild will ring when to clear away.

GRAY—Very good, sir. Thank you, sir. Beg pardon, really, I'm sure.—*(Retires discreetly with tray containing decanter and glasses of wine into dining room center, closing doors behind him. Gordon and Sidney wait till he exits—turn and look at each other.)*

GORDON—You haven't blown out your birthday candle.—*(Gordon has crossed to the right of table C.)*

SIDNEY—*(Crossing to GordonV*—Must I?

GORDON—*(Raises cake, holding it up to her)*—Oh, yes—*(Sidney is about to blow out cake.)*—Wait—you must make a wish first.

SIDNEY—*(Going to table)*—All right.

GORDON—Have you a wish?

SIDNEY—*(Pauses)*—Yes!

GORDON—Have you wished it?

SIDNEY—Now I have!

GORDON—Go ahead then—blow it out.

SIDNEY—*(He raises cake; she blows out the candle.)* I wonder if it will come true.

GORDON—*(Sincerely)*—If it's what I hope it is I hope it will.

SIDNEY—I'll let you know if it does.—*(She starts to run upstairs.)*

GORDON—*(Following her)*—Oh, Sidney—tell me what was it?

SIDNEY—It mightn't come true if I tell.—*(Running back of table, crosses down to fireplace and sofa—Gordon crossing down C.)*

GORDON—Why do you always run away from me?

SIDNEY— I don't.

GORDON—You do whenever we're alone. Of course we hardly ever are alone. These three guardsmen—look out for that. But when I do have a moment with you, you seem to want to avoid me.

SIDNEY—*(Goes to Gordon)*—I'm not avoiding you now, am I?

GORDON—No, that's fine. Now sit down.

SIDNEY—But I've got to get ready.

GORDON—Just a minute—there's something I want to tell you—something about you.

SIDNEY—*(She sits)*—About me?

GORDON—Yes—what you've been doing.

SIDNEY—*(Alarmed)*—What I've been doing—why Gordon—

GORDON—*(Drawing a chair up and sitting near her)* What you've been doing for these three wise men. I've watched your method and learned a lot from you. You let them think they're managing and laying out every detail of your life, while all the time you're completely changing theirs, and they don't even realize it.

SIDNEY—*(Half smiling)*—Oh, Gordon—

GORDON—Everything seems to have gone right since you came here, and, somehow, it's all without effort,—Uncle's house accounts, the doctor's appointments—and you're even helping the judge with his briefs. Why Sidney, you've made it all a different house in one short month. I've found now how to handle my job at the office by watching you here.

SIDNEY—Watching me?

GORDON—Yes—just saying nothing but keeping on the job all the while with a smile. It's a wonderful scheme, Sidney, and they're beginning to think I'm good at the office. To-day I got my first month's wages.—*(He laughs)*—Never earned a dollar before in my life. May I show it to you.

SIDNEY—Why, yes—

GORDON—*(Takes out package from pocket unwraps it, it contains a very handsome watchcase—opens it—takes out a small wrist watch—holds it up before Sidney—who looks at it—touched.)*—It's a wrist watch.

SIDNEY—*(Pause)*—Yes—*(pause.)*

GORDON—It's for you.

SIDNEY—You spent all your salary for that?

GORDON—Why, don't you like it?

SIDNEY—Of course I do. But you shouldn't have done it.

GORDON—It was the very best thing I could have done with it, and by Jove! now it can be a birthday present.—*(Reaches for her hand—she not realizing what he is about to do—draws away)*—I—I want to put it on—

SIDNEY—Oh—*(Gordon puts watch on her wrist, sighs—)*

GORDON—Oh! I wish it were something to go on your finger.—*(Gordon leans over, grabs her hand and kisses it; she rises quickly draws away from him.)*

SIDNEY—*(Low voice)*—Please—no—

GORDON—Why not?

SIDNEY—Gordon, you—you don't know me.—*(Gordon tries to embrace her.)*

GORDON—Yes, I do.

SIDNEY—*(Crosses to center, speaking same time.)*—Please don't. We mustn't think of each other that way.

GORDON—*(Follows her to center.)*—But it's too late to say that now, I do think of you that way and you know it. I have thought of you that way ever since you came here that night. Don't you care a little for me, don't you, Sidney? Please tell me.

SIDNEY—*(Hesitates for a moment, turns looks at Gordon)*—I—I—

GORDON—You needn't tell me now, I know you do. *(Grabs her hands, holds them up to him.)*—It just is—it's bigger than either of us.

SIDNEY—Oh, don't say that.

GORDON—Why not, you know it's true.—*(They look at each other.)*

SIDNEY—*(Weakly)*—Please go and dress like a good fellow.

GORDON—But why?

SIDNEY—But I'll be late, and I musn't keep them waiting.—*(Sidney starts up to the stairs: Gordon intercepts her.)*

GORDON—Oh, Sidney, I—

SIDNEY—Oh, Gordon—we must be sensible.

GORDON—*(Smiling)*—But we are.—*(Takes her in his arms, draws her to him.)*—What would be more sensible than this I'd like to know.—*(Bending toward her.)*—Please may I—

SIDNEY— *(Weakening)* —And—and—no.—*(Turns her head away.)*

GORDON—*(Still holding her—she facing front.)*—I promise to go if you will.—*(Pause—Gordons kisses her upon the cheek—pause—Sidney turns looks into Gordon's eyes places both arms about his neck and kisses him; embrace. Sidney clings to him for a moment.)*

SIDNEY—Gordon, oh, dear—I've tried to be careful and now it's all gone and happened—

GORDON—*(Kissing her again—not so awkwardly)*—In spite of us.—*(She looks at him tenderly; he kisses her on the eyes, nose, fairly gobbles her up with kisses; she fights herself clear.)*

SIDNEY—*(Backing away from him to R. of C. upstage; he following her)*—Please go now, you promised.

GORDON—*(Gaily)*—Just one more—just one more and I'll go.—*(Trying to embrace her.)*

SIDNEY—*(Pushing him off)*—No, no, Gordon, I want to show you something.

GORDON—*(Dazed)*—What?

SIDNEY—Why—why—oh—*(Looking about room, sees desk, runs to it—opens drawer and produces keys)*—These.

GORDON—What about them?

SIDNEY—I am house-keeper now.

GORDON—Housekeeper?

SIDNEY—Yes, sir. I'm going to have charge of the cellar, linen, silver, keep all the accounts, and look after the servants.—*(Handing keys to Gordon, and crossing down R. to chair that is near settee, facing front.)*

GORDON—In that case you'd better watch them.

SIDNEY—Watch them, why?

GORDON—Because one of them has been going out late, and returning before you're all up.—*(Places keys on table center.)*

SIDNEY—What makes you think that?

GORDON—A detective told me.

SIDNEY—*(Sitting down involuntarily.)*—A detective?

GORDON—Oh!—*(Crossing to Sidney R.C.)*—I've frightened you.

SIDNEY—*(Deathly pale)*—No, not frightened, just surprised that's all.

GORDON—Why didn't you know this house was being watched.

SIDNEY—Watched? No, wha—what for?

GORDON—Judge Trumbull—he doesn't know it, but they think his life is in danger. You see he's apt to be severe on criminals, and they don't like him. They nearly got him once before, so I guess that's why they're being careful.—*(She stares at him.)*—Oh, I have frightened you. It's nothing at all. Just a sort of precaution.

SIDNEY—*(Rising. In a quiet voice.)*—I'm not frightened.

GORDON—Good then, give me one more and I'll go. *(She backing from him toward window.)*

SIDNEY—*(Smiling with an effort)*—No, you don't.

GORDON—Please—

SIDNEY—Go dress or you'll be late.

GORDON—You're terribly sensible.—*(Goes to door R. in flat.)*—Any way there's no law against my loving you, is there?—*(Blows kiss from his hand—exit door R. in flat. Sidney peering through curtains to get sight of the detective. Enter Gray C. from dining room sees Sidney as he is crossing to door R.)*

GRAY—I beg pardon, Miss, the door bell.—*(Exit door R. At Grey's exit, Sidney pauses for a moment, closes curtains, crosses stage back of table, picks up key ring with keys and is startled by the voice of Gray. Hearing the noise in the hall she rushes toward curtains—at window again. In hall—off stage.*—Just a moment, sir, you can't come in here. Ah, let go my throat.—*(Dull thud is heard off stage. Sidney peers from curtains just in time to see Gray fall, being blackjacked by Benny the Duck; as he falls she screams—about to start toward center. Enter Benny quickly—slams door behind him with revolver in hand—he stops Sidney.)*

BENNY—No, you don't—keep quiet do you hear?—*(Aiming pistol at her.)*

SIDNEY—*(Recognizing him—subdued.)*—Benny!

BENNY—Sidney!

SIDNEY—*(In horror)*—Has anything happened to my father?

BENNY—No, your father's all right!

SIDNEY—I was afraid he'd been caught.

BENNY—But what are you doing here?

SIDNEY—This is where I live.

BENNY—Where you live?

SIDNEY—Yes. Didn't father tell you about—that?

BENNY—No.

SIDNEY—Then why are you here?

BENNY—Why, aint this Judge Trumbull's house?

SIDNEY—Yes.

BENNY—*(Crosses stage in front of table, going up to electric button on wall L. of C. door, speaking at the same time.)*—Then you get out of here quick. Go back to your

father. Hurry now take it on the run.—*(Turning out lights.)*

NOTE:—All brackets, foots and borders out nothing on but the baby spot—2 stand lamps—fireplace and from window.)

(Sidney crosses to him.)

SIDNEY—What are you going to do?

BENNY—That's my business.

SIDNEY—But Benny these people are my friends.

BENNY—Friends? Is Judge Trumbull your friend?

SIDNEY—Yes.

BENNY—Where is he?

SIDNEY—What do you want of the Judge? Oh—*(As she steps back from him. In sudden horror.)*—It can't be that Judge Trumbull's the man you told me about?

BENNY—Yes, he is—he's the dog that sent me up. I've been waiting ten years to get him, damn him!—*(Turns away from her.)*

SIDNEY—*(She catches him, turns him back to her.)* But you mustn't harm him now, Benny. He's befriended me, done everything for me.

BENNY—It won't do no good to talk, I won't let nothin' stand in my way. I swore I'd get him and this is my chance.

SIDNEY—No, no, Benny. You must go—I beg of you!

BENNY—Tell me where he is.

SIDNEY—He's gone out.

BENNY—*(Eyeing her)*—Yes he has. Is he out that way? Well, I'll look out here to make sure.—*(Starts for door left as Sidney watches him. Sidney does not move; at the door he turns and looks at her.)*—He ain't out there, that's certain. He's upstairs, that's where he is.—*(He quickly runs up to the top of the stairs; at top of stairs he looks over bannister at Sidney.)*—He ain't up here either, eh?—*(Sees library door for the first time which is L.U. entrance.)*—Where does that door lead to?

SIDNEY—*(With a little cry rushes up to library door—puts her back against it.)*—Benny—

BENNY—*(In triumph)*—Oh, so that's where he is, is it?—*(Comes down stairs front facing her.)*

SIDNEY—No, no, now listen, Benny. You mustn't harm the Judge, you shan't.

BENNY—I shan't, eh? What's the reason I shan't?

SIDNEY—I won't let you. I'll stop you somehow.

BENNY—We'll see about that. Get away from that door.

SIDNEY—No.

BENNY—Go on now, before I—*(As he sees this does not frighten her he changes his tone)*—I don't want to hurt you—Sidney——-

SIDNEY—No, Benny, I wont——

BENNY—Then I'll have to make you.—*(Grabbing her. He struggles with her, pushes her half way down stairs—where she gets away from him, after struggling and rushes to window right; Benny turns quickly back to library door and gets his hand on the knob, as Sidney blows police whistle. Benny turns and darts after her—Sidney rushes to door R. C.; as he starts after her)*—Damn you, what are you doing?

SIDNEY—I had to do it, Benny, you made me. I had to do it, I had to do it.

BENNY—*(He catches her at door)*—The bulls are watching this house, they'll get me sure.—*(Whistle blows off stage; Benny looks front).*

SIDNEY—The police.

BENNY—They've heard you. It's all up, I'm done for.

SIDNEY—I couldn't help it. I had to do it!

BENNY—And your father? They'll get him. This time they'll send him up for life!—*(Knocking heard off stage at outer door by Poole, Clancey, Policeman, and Splevin. Voices calling—shouting).*

SIDNEY—*(Crossing stage quickly followed by Benny; they start upstairs)*—No, no, listen Benny—you can escape. Come quick. I can help you.—*(Sidney and Benny are in the dark upon the second flight of stairs when the dining room doors are suddenly thrown open, knocking from outside heard very loud—DOUGLAS rushes in, closing folding doors behind him and runs out door R.—as he opens door he sees Grey who is lying full length head towards center—outside seeing Grey he exclaims).*

DOUGLAS—Grey—*(The knocking is still continued, which attracts Douglas attention, who exits to right as if to unlock door).*

SIDNEY—By the roof. I've got the keys. Follow me. Quickly! Hurry! *(She runs upstairs; Benny following, bang is heard on the front door, then distant voices).*

VOICES—What's the matter in there? Here, let me in!—*(POOLE enters hurriedly, crosses stage and turns up lights. Douglas re-enters immediately, motions for the officer—who assists him in placing Gray in a sitting position with Douglas at his head holding him. CLANCEY rushes on stage from door right joining Poole).*

CLANCEY—What's up Chief?

POOLE—*(Comes up center)*—Benny the Duck has got by us some way.

CLANCEY—Well he can't get out; we've got a guard around the house.

POOLE—Well make a search for him; the cellar first.

CLANCEY—Right you are.—*(Goes out through hall. Poole comes quickly back to Gray—speaks to Douglas.)*

POOLE—Is he done for?

DOUGLAS—No, his heart is still beating.

POOLE—Help me get him on the sofa over there.—*(Poole takes him by the legs—Douglas by the arms—they carry him in on to settee right; then the Three Wise Men come dashing in from library all talking together).*

DR. GAUNT—What is it? *(Together.)*

FINDLEY—What's goin on here?

POOLE—Your butler, Doctor.

DR. GAUNT—Good heavens, Gray.—*(Dr. G. and Findley cross to Grey kneeling over him).*

JUDGE—What is all this?

POOLE—*(To Judge)*—I'm glad to see you're all right, Judge.

JUDGE—What has happened here, Poole?

POOLE—It's Benny the Duck, Judge.

JUDGE—Benny, eh?

DR. GAUNT—My medicine case, Douglas, it's in the hall, I think.

JUDGE—*(To Gaunt)*—Is it serious, Dick?

DR. GAUNT—I don't think so. He got a hard blow here on the head. But his heart action's strong.—*(Exit Douglas door R. Dr. Gaunt unloosens Gray's shirt, collar and tie, examining him, while Judge and Findley assist).*

POOLE—I'm glad it's no worse than that. I thought he was a goner when I saw him.—*(Policemen enters quickly door R.—to Poole, who is left of door.)*

POLICEMAN—We've got him, chief.

POOLE—Who, Benny?

POLICEMAN—I'm sure it's him. He's sneaking down the fire-escape of the next building.

POOLE—Well don't let him see any of you.

POLICEMAN—Why don't you want us to nab him?

POOLE—No, follow him. I want to know where he goes. There's another one I'm looking for.—*(As Policeman starts for door.)*

POLICEMAN—Right you are!

POOLE—Don't let him get out of sight now.

POLICEMAN—No chance.—*(Exits door R.)*

CLANCEY—*(Entering from left 2nd entrance.)*—No one in the cellar, chief.

POOLE—*(Crosses to left center upstage.)*—He's got out through the roof somehow. Have a look up there—let me know what you find.

JUDGE—*(Indicating stairs.)*—Up that way.

CLANCEY—Yes, sir.—*(Exit upstairs 2nd door.)*

JUDGE—*(Who has crossed to Poole.)*—How did Benny get in here, Poole?

POOLE—*(Turns to Judge.)*—That's what I'd like to know. We've been watching this house for a month.

JUDGE—Yes, I know you have.—*(Findley turns up to them.)*

POOLE—Oh—*(Surprised.)*—We didn't think you knew about that, sir. It was someone on the inside let him in.

FINDLEY—What's that.—*(Crossing up and joining Judge and Poole who are left center.)*

POOLE—That's what I think.

FINDLEY—You mean someone in this house?

POOLE—Are you sure that your servants here are all right, sir?—*(Enter Sidney from above door; she is very pale and frightened, has opera coat on, comes down steps almost to the first landing—listening to the conversation but not observed by others.)*

FINDLEY—Absolutely, I'll vouch for every one of them.

POOLE—Well, I've had a report one of 'em 's been seen going out late at night.

FINDLEY—What's that?

POOLE—And getting in just before daylight.

FINDLEY—*(Looks at Judge)*—You've seen one of our servants—

POOLE—No, I haven't, but one of the boys has.

FINDLEY—I don't believe a word of it.

POOLE—Do you mind if I question them?

FINDLEY—Not at all. Question them as much as please.—*(Sidney—half faints on the stairs, clinging to banister. As all catch sight of Sidney.)*

JUDGE—Ah, Sidney—

FINDLEY—Good God—*(Judge and Findley rushes up to assist her downstairs.)*

SIDNEY—I'm all right.

JUDGE—*(As he reaches her.)*—Why, you're trembling like a leaf.

FINDLEY—There, there's nothing to worry about now, dear. An escaped convict got into the house but the police frightened him away.—*(By this time they've assisted Sidney down the steps to the foot of the stairs; she sees Gray with the doctor working over him on the settee right, crosses quickly to him—kneels.)*

SIDNEY—*(Horrified.)*—Doctor, is he badly hurt?—*(Douglas enters right in flat with medicine case—crosses down behind settee with back to audience—at the head of Gray.)*

DR. GAUNT—No, no, dear, it's nothing serious. Take her away, Jimmy, please.

DOUGLAS—*(Bringing in small medicine case.)*—Is this the one Doctor?

DR. GAUNT—Yes—*(takes case from Douglas.)*—Now we'll take him into the other room.—*(as the Judge and Findley go to help, Douglas and Dr. Gaunt pick Gray up, Sidney takes the pillow from under Gray's head and returns it to the window seat.)*—Don't you fellows trouble. Douglas and I can manage it. You take Sidney off to the opera and I'll follow you. Don't worry Sidney, I'll have him on his feet in no time.—*(Exit Dr. Gaunt carrying Gray off, holding his feet, with Douglas bearing him under the shoulders—they exit door R.)*

SIDNEY—Oh, surely we don't want to go to the opera now.

FINDLEY—*(Crosses up back of table centre.)*—Of course we do.—*(Exit Dr. and Douglas carrying Gray door right in flat.)*

CLANCEY—*(Bursting in door upstairs, rushing down stairway.)*—He's made a getaway, chief. He got out through the skylight.

POOLE—Yes, I know that.

CLANCEY—He must have had help from the inside allright. The one who let him in let him out.

POOLE—Clancey, you reported to me that you had seen one of the servants leaving this house late at night.

CLANCEY—I did, yes.

POOLE—Do you think you could identify her?

CLANCEY—Why, yes, I think so. She was a slender —rather—!—*(Sees Sidney and abruptly come down C.)*

POOLE—*(Going down L.)*—What's the matter?

CLANCEY—*(Coming down L.C.—a little bewildered)* Just about the size of that lady there.—*(A look between Findley and Judge.)*

FINDLEY—*(Crosses to Clancey. Judge puts arms about Sidney.)*—Now, see here, do you mean—to accuse this young lady—

CLANCEY—I don't mean to accuse anybody, sir.

FINDLEY—Well, you'd better not. What makes you so sure that someone in the house helped that man escape?

CLANCEY—Do you keep the door of your skylight open, sir?

FINDLEY—No, it's always kept locked.

CLANCEY—I found it open.

FINDLEY—Broken open?

CLANCEY—No, sir. Opened with this key, and this bunch of keys was in the lock.—*(Shows bunch of keys. Another look between Findley and Judge. Findley takes the keys and he and Judge look at same; Poole crosses to left centre. Judge takes Sidney to sofa R., sits)*

JUDGE—Now, don't let anything these men say alarm you, dear.—*(A significant look between Clancey and Poole.)*—Do you remember just what you did with your keys?

SIDNEY—*(Who is seated on sofa.)*—I put them in my desk.

JUDGE—And that's the last time you saw them?

SIDNEY—No, I took them out and showed them to Gordon, then I left them on the table there.

JUDGE—Gordon saw you take them out of your desk?

SIDNEY—Yes.

JUDGE—And put them on the table?

SIDNEY—Yes.—*(Judge crosses above table to Clancey; Findley crosses to settee right, takes Sidney in his arms.)*

JUDGE—All right, dear, all right.—*(Crosses to Clancey.)*—Now you say you saw a woman about Miss Fairchild's size leaving this house late at night.

CLANCEY—Yes, sir.

JUDGE—Did she come out of the front door?

CLANCEY—No, sir, by the basement door.

JUDGE—How was she dressed?

CLANCEY—She had on a dark dress. It was black, I should say. Sort of shabby looking.

FINDLEY—Well, Sidney hasn't any dark dress, and nothing that looks shabby. I can guarantee that. I had a hand in selecting her wardrobe myself.—*(His face suddenly becomes grim and he exchanges an odd look with the Judge—Sidney watching them closely.)*

JUDGE—Where is that dress you wore when you first came here, Sidney?

FINDLEY—What?

SIDNEY—I don't know.

JUDGE—You don't know?—*(Clancey crosses up centre.)*

SIDNEY—Mrs. Saunders took it.—*(All look relieved; Judge crosses up to left of C. door—pulls bell cord, crosses down back of table to R.C.—to Sidney.)*

JUDGE—When did she take it dear?

SIDNEY—The day after I came here.—*(Enters Mrs. Saunders door left 2nd entrance, crosses down L.C.)*

JUDGE—Oh, then you haven't had that dress for a month?

SIDNEY—No, sir.

JUDGE—*(Turns, sees Saunders, crosses to C. in front of table.)*—Saunders, do you remember the dress Miss Fairchild wore the evening she first came to us?

SAUNDERS—*(Astonished at their faces.)*—Yes, sir.

JUDGE—Do you know what became of it?

SAUNDERS—I took it.

JUDGE—When did you take it?

SAUNDERS—The day after she came. When Mr. Findley bought her new things, sir.

JUDGE—What did you do with it?

SAUNDERS—Threw it in the old clothes hamper, sir, in the back hall. I didn't think she'd want it again.

JUDGE—Is it there now?

SAUNDERS—It was until this noon, sir. I sent it with a bundle of old clothes to the Mission.—*(Findley looks triumph; bus. of Clancey looking puzzled.)*

JUDGE—*(Solo voice.)*—That will do Saunders.

SAUNDERS—*(Crosses up to door, L. 2nd entrance; Poole intercepting her; Judge crossing to centre right.)*

POOLE—Do you keep that hamper locked, ma'am?—*(Judge crossing back to centre in front of table.)*

SAUNDERS—The old clothes hamper? Lord, no.

POOLE—So it would be an easy thing to take that dress out and put it back again?

JUDGE—Poole—*(Poole turns away from Saunders.)*

POOLE—Yes, sir.—*(Saunders crosses to door L. 2nd and opens same.)*

JUDGE—You say you wanted to question the servants.—*(Poole comes a little to L. of C.)*

POOLE—I did, but—

JUDGE—*(Crosses up to library door.)*—Show him where to go, Saunders.

SAUNDERS—*(At door L. 2nd.)*—This way.—*(Exit Poole door left 2nd.)*

JUDGE—You better go with him.

CLANCEY—It wouldn't be much use now.

JUDGE—*(Sternly.)*—Well, go anyway.

CLANCEY—Yes, sir.—*(Exit hurriedly through door L. 2nd entrance, followed by Saunders.)*

JUDGE—*(Who is going upstairs.)*—Teddy, you look after Sidney. See that she doesn't worry. I shan't be long.—*(Exit upstairs.)*

FINDLEY—*(Sitting down beside her, takes her hand.)* There, there, Sidney. Those fellows don't know what they're talking about, and we'll forget all about it.—*(Findley rises, crosses to chair right of table centre, brings chair to R.C. sits facing Sidney.)*

SIDNEY—I'm afraid I can't.

FINDLEY—Now, now, now, I know those fellows frightened you nearly to death, the fools. Why that man frightened me the same way the first night you came here. *(Enters Dr. G. right centre, crosses down R.C. back of Sidney.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Cheerily.)*—Well, well, well, why aren't you at the opera.—*(Sees Sidney.)*—Why, Sidney, what's the matter?

FINDLEY—That fool detective has been frightening her half to death.—*(Rises, crosses to table with chair.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(To Sidney)*—What did he say to you?

FINDLEY—The fool insists—he saw her leaving the house late at night.

DR. GAUNT—*(Exploding)*—They thought that you—did they say—well upon my word—our police are the limit for stupidity and arrogance—*(Crossing to left centre.)*

FINDLEY—*(Same tone.)*—They think someone in the house let that fellow in.

DR. GAUNT—Well, he's right.

FINDLEY—*(Rises, place chair back of table.)*—What?

DR. GAUNT—Some one in the house did let him in, and I know who it was.

FINDLEY—Well, who was it?—*(Sidney rises.)*

DR. GAUNT—Gray.—*(Sidney re-seats.)*—He just told me all about it. It was all very simple.—*(Dr. Gaunt is down L.C.)*—Benny the Duck came to the front door, rang the bell, Gray let Benny in, Benny knocked Gray out and there you are.

FINDLEY—*(Crosses to Sidney helps her to rise.)*—Now are you satisfied? You've been tried and found innocent.—*(Sidney attempting to smile, crosses to C. Judge enters down the stairs with Sidney's blue satin slippers, he lays them on the table L. C. with the heels toward the audience, his face grave.)*—It's all right, Jimmy, the mystery is solved. It was Gray who let Benny in.

JUDGE—*(Crosses down to C. in front of table.)*—So I've just heard. Now what we are trying to determine is who let him out.—*(Dr. crosses down L.C. Findley R.C.)*

FINDLEY—What's the matter, Jimmy? Have you discovered anything? Have you found out how that fellow got those keys?

SIDNEY—*(Quickly turns upstage C. his back to audience.)*—Oh—

JUDGE—*(taking her hand and looking searchingly into her face.)*—My dear girl—as long as you had nothing to do with this affair you haven't the slightest cause for alarm. The fact that you had those keys doesn't prove anything at all. And if they happened to be on this table when the man was in the room—it's almost certain he'd take them. Now when you left the room you were here with Gordon?

SIDNEY—Yes.

JUDGE—And what did you do after Gordon left?

SIDNEY—I went up to my room.

JUDGE—But you didn't come back here again?

SIDNEY—No.

JUDGE—Then you were in your room all the time until you came down and found us here?

SIDNEY—Yes.

JUDGE—And you heard no disturbance, no unusual sound?

SIDNEY—No, not that I remember.

JUDGE—*(Drops Sidney's hands.)*—Now think, Sidney. Did you for any reason at all go up to the top floor?

SIDNEY—No.

JUDGE—You're quite sure?

SIDNEY—Yes.

JUDGE—Now, Sidney, don't let this frighten you. I've been too many years on the criminal bench to be deceived by circumstantial evidence. I don't want you to feel that I think this counts in any way against you.—*(Puts hand in pocket and draws out something; keeps hand closed.)*—But how could it be possible for a buckle from one of your blue satin slippers to be found on the threshold of the door to the skylight.

SIDNEY—*(Sinks down in chair R. of table C. nonplussed.)*—I don't know.

JUDGE—*(He turns away, relieved.)*

SIDNEY—But I did cut one of the buckles off.

JUDGE—*(Turns back to her and in a dull voice.)*—You cut it off?

SIDNEY—Yes, but that was down here in this room. It was hanging by a thread and I cut it off.

JUDGE—What did you cut it off with?

SIDNEY—With my scissors—on my desk. I laid the buckle right down on the keys.—*(Dr. Gaunt goes over to table L.C., takes up slippers, comes C. with slippers in his hand with a look of amazement on his face.)*

JUDGE—*(Sadly.)*—Sidney—Sidney.

DR. GAUNT—Why, Jimmy, both buckles are here.—*(Findley crossing to R.C.)*

FINDLEY—Where's the buckle you had in your hand, Jim?

JUDGE—*(Opening hand)*—I had no buckle.—*(Turning away toward left.)*—There was no buckle.

DR. GAUNT—Sidney—

FINDLEY—Good God—

SIDNEY—*(Desperately)*—Well, perhaps—perhaps Saunders sewed—

JUDGE—Don't say any more, Sidney. We've found out.—*(Judge crosses to table left, sits.)*

SIDNEY—*(Bursting into tears.)*—I do know him—I did go out at night, but I didn't know he was coming here. I didn't know he knew Judge Trumbull. I swear it.—*(She falls on knees, back to audience over table C.)*

FINDLEY—*(Coldly—crosses to Sidney, picks her up, turns her to him—long pause.)*—How did you come to know such a man?

SIDNEY—*(Pulling herself together with a sudden chill of terror.)*—I can't tell you.

FINDLEY—Has this man a power over you?—*(Tears blur her eyes, she says nothing.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Crosses to L.C. of Sidney.)*—Sidney, listen to me. You must try now for all our sakes to realize how terrible things look for you. You have confessed knowing a criminal who came here tonight to assassinate Judge Trumbull.

SIDNEY—No, no, no.

FINDLEY—And you helped him to escape.

DR. GAUNT—*(Backing away from her.)*—What possible relation could you have with such a creature?—*(She turns and looks at the three; then turns away from them.)*

SIDNEY—I can't tell you, I can't tell you.

FINDLEY—*(Angrily)*—You will tell us.—*(Sidney drawing herself up defiantly. Bus. of crying through Findley's speech.)*

SIDNEY—I can't, I can't!

FINDLEY—You want us to hand you over to the police?

SIDNEY—*(After long pause—sobbing—then in a humble voice. Turns to Findley.)*—I didn't mean any harm—*(To Dr.)*—I didn't mean any harm—*(To Judge)*—I didn't mean any harm.—*(Dr. Gaunt crosses up back of table C.)*

FINDLEY—If you don't tell us the truth—tell us everything—we'll hand you bag and baggage over to the police.

SIDNEY—*(Who has crossed up L.C. towards stairs.)* I didn't mean any harm—

FINDLEY—*(Who follows her up to foot of stairs)*—Where are you going?

SIDNEY—To my room. To be ready to go with the police.

FINDLEY—They'll force you to tell everything.

SIDNEY—*(Who is up at first landing of stairs.)*—No, no. They'll never get anything out of me, no, no, never, never, never—*(Runs weeping out of room and up the stairs, exit hurriedly slamming door behind her. Judge is seated on sofa near fireplace. Dr. is down left centre. Findley up back. Enter Gordon, bursts in gaily, fully dressed for the opera.)*

GORDON—*(Cheerfully.)*—You've got the right idea about going to the opera. You'll get there just in time to come home. I've hunted all over the horseshoe for you.—*(Looking from one to the other; they don't notice him. Findley has crossed over right near window.)*—What's the matter? What's up?—*(Look about alarmed.)*—Where is Sidney? Nothing's happened to her?

DR. GAUNT—Gordon, we accepted Sidney on faith, but we should have enquired into her past a little more.

GORDON—What are you talking about, sir?

DR. GAUNT—An attempt was made on Judge Trumbull's life since you've been gone. Sidney knew the criminal and she helped him to escape.—*(Cross to C.L.)*

GORDON—You're crazy, sir.

FINDLEY—*(Crosses to Center.)*—No, Gordon, her guilt has been proved absolutely.

GORDON—*(Turns on him.)*—Guilt? Uncle—have you all gone mad?—*(Turns to Judge.)*—Do you believe this, Judge Trumbull?—*(Crosses to Judge. Judge slowly bows his head. Gordon crosses back to center.)*—Where is she?

FINDLEY—In her room.

GORDON—*(Starts for stairs.)*—I want to see her.

DR. GAUNT—*(Confronting him.)*—Gordon, listen, there can be no mistake in what we've told you. We not only have positive proof, but Sidney herself has confessed it.

GORDON—*(Knocked out for a moment.)*—Sidney confessed?

DR. GAUNT—Yes, Gordon.—*(Gordon turns front.)* She admitted both knowing the man and helping him escape.

GORDON—And you mean to say you believe her. Then you have all gone mad. Sidney, Sidney—*(Gordon dashes out of room up the stairway to Sidney's room and exits. Poole knocks on hall door and comes right in, crossing to C. R.—to Findley.)*

POOLE—*(Excitedly.)*—Excuse me, gentlemen, they've just telephoned Benny's located at a cheap boarding house on the West side. I told them not to arrest him, but to watch the house until I got there. We may be able to get bigger fish. Now about that young lady—I'd like to tell you—

GORDON—*(Re-enters hurriedly down the stairs, speaking at the same time)*—She's not in her room; she's gone.

DR. GAUNT—Gone?

FINDLEY—Escaped?

POOLE—If it's the young lady that's under suspicion, we've got her.

GORDON—*(Who has crossed to Poole.)*—You've got her?

POOLE—She went down the servants' stairs a few minutes ago. But the boys are following her. Give her plenty of rope, that's my method.—*(Starts as if to exit.)*

GORDON—*(Turns to Poole.)*—See here, these gentlemen were mistaken about Miss Fairchild.—*(Turns pleadingly to The Three Wise Men.)*—Tell them that's she's innocent, won't you?—*(They all are silent—short pause.)*

FINDLEY—But we know she's guilty.

GORDON—*(Turning to Findley.)*—Guilty? Here are the pearls you gave her. She left them on her dressing case. I suppose you'll think that that's another proof of her guilt.—*(Throws string of pearls down at Findley's feet.)*

POOLE—If she's innocent she can explain that to the Commissioner.

GORDON—Wait a minute, I'm going with you.—*(Crosses over near the door R.)*

FINDLEY—*(He is up center.)*—Where are you going?

GORDON—Where I belong—wherever Sidney is.—*(Judge crossing to the L. of table C.)*

JUDGE—What do you think you can do?

GORDON—I can't do worse than you have done.

DR. GAUNT—Wait, Gordon, we know how you feel. But don't you see—

GORDON—Yes, I do see, but you don't. Because you're blind. Blind to everything but yourselves. You think you're Three Wise Men—but you're not; you're three damn old fools, that's what you are—three damn old fools.—*(Exit hurriedly.)*

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE—Same as before. All the flowers have disappeared. Set to be exactly same as first act. It is half an hour later. Dr. Gaunt is at sofa, staring into space. Findley is center at his card table, looking front. Hold this until door L.U. opens. Saunders enters carrying Sidney's two handbags, comes down the stairs very quietly, crosses to Findley. Findley after awhile pretends to notice Saunders for the first time.

Dr. Gaunt watches her fixedly and Findley following the Doctor's glance sees her also. Mrs. S. has a mournful expression on her face and has difficulty in keeping her voice from breaking as she speaks.)

SAUNDERS—The room is quite cleared out now, Mr. Findley. Miss Sidney brought these with her when she came; shall I keep them for her, sir?—*(Enter Douglas down stairs.)*

FINDLEY—Yes, I suppose they'll be called for.—*(Saunders crosses stage and exits with the bags, door R. Findley has watched her exit, turns and sees Douglas standing on his left as he is playing cards.)*—What is it, Douglas?

DOUGLAS—It's about Gray, sir.

DR. GAUNT—*(Quickly—looking up)*—He isn't any worse is he?

DOUGLAS—No, sir, but he's insisting on getting up and dressing, sir.

DR. GAUNT—Oh—

DOUGLAS—He says it's nearing your bedtime, sir, and he wants to get up and get your apples and hot water. He won't let me do it.

FINDLEY—Well, you tell him that Dr. Gaunt says we are not to have apples and hot water any more, Douglas.

DOUGLAS—*(Starts upstairs to library door. Stops at the door.)*—Beg pardon, sir!

FINDLEY—Apples and hot water are "ruts," Douglas, and we're not to have ruts here, Douglas, because if you get into ruts you're dead, but if you get out of ruts and have plenty of excitement and tonic emotions and buttercups and daisies and all the other damn things—why you can live on forever.

DOUGLAS—Yes, sir.—*(Exits.)*

FINDLEY—*(Sarcastically looking at the Doctor who is puffing huge clouds of smoke.)*—Eminent physhologist. Marvelous specialist. Bah!—*(Slams card on table imitating the Doctor's voice.)*—"Ruts, Teddy, ruts—we're all dead and we don't know it, Teddy, because of ruts"—*(Pause)*—I like ruts and by God I want ruts and the next time anybody tries to put a stop to my ruts I'll give him a kick right in the middle of his sympathetic system.—*(Pause.)*—I don't see why in the name of hell—

DR. GAUNT—Teddy.—*(Findley looks around at Sidney's writing desk, rises crosses to it—takes coin from pocket puts it into glass jar—is about to go back to his own table—turns looks at glass jar, then at Dr. empties all the coins into his own hand from jar, places them in his pocket, crosses back center and seats himself at his own table.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Coughs self-consciously—trying to make conversation.)*—I—I've been reading my articles over.

FINDLEY—And by God it serves you right. I wish you had to read it over for the rest of your life.—*(Dr. resumes his reading. Findley turns back to his game. Enter Saunders and stands on Findley's right.)*

SAUNDERS—Here's the needle and thread you asked for, sir.

FINDLEY—*(After a look at his clothes.)*—I asked for a needle and thread?

SAUNDERS—You said you wanted to string the pearls, sir.

FINDLEY—Oh—*(He slowly takes them from his coat pocket, looks at them, then takes thread, and slowly begins to string the pearls—Saunders watches him for a moment and moaning sob.)*—Now what's the matter with YOU?

SAUNDERS—I'm upset, sir.

FINDLEY—Go away and be upset somewhere else.—*(Saunders goes back of Findley to L.)*

SAUNDERS—I am going away sir, for good.

FINDLEY—What's that?

SAUNDERS—*(Comes back to his L.)*—I've got to, Mr. Findley.

FINDLEY—You mean you're giving notice?

SAUNDERS—Yes, sir, I am.

DR. GAUNT—*(Rise comes to front of table L.)*—Why Saunders what's the trouble?

SAUNDERS—*(Crossing to L.C.)*—Why, I can't stand such goings on, sir. With murderers in the house, and those detectives suspecting us all—and your driving out that poor girl—*(Findley looks at Doctor.)*

FINDLEY—Ah! hah.

SAUNDERS—I could never be contented here again, never.—*(Cries.)*

FINDLEY—*(To Doctor)*—Well, Dr. Quack, I hope you're satisfied.

DR. GAUNT—*(Turns to Findley.)*—What have I got to do with it.

FINDLEY—What have you got to do with it. Saunders was in a rut well ordered and happy, she's being pulled out violently, rolled among your buttercups and now look at the damn thing—*(Exit Saunders, door L. C. entrance with toss of her head.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(After pause—rises, throws medical journal on table left—crosses to Findley.)*—Teddy, do you want to know something?

FINDLEY—*(Who is stringing Sidney's string of beads.)*—Not from you.

DR. GAUNT—*(With a sigh.)*—I don't wonder.

DR. GAUNT—*(Who is L.C.)*—We so called psychologists are nothing but wind bags—so easy to theorize, and yet at the first touch of real life, I collapse like a pricked baloon.

FINDLEY—Well, there's no use crying about it.

DR. GAUNT—No. That's true, and you must admit—*(Crossing back to Findley.)*—There was something in my theory. The change did lift us, a long way up.

FINDLEY—It did, and then dropped us.

DR. GAUNT—I know, I know.—*(Sighs)*—Oh, dear!—*(Crosses back to sofa L.—sits humbly.)*

FINDLEY—*(Rises—crosses down left, pats Dr. on arm.)*—Oh, come now, Dick. Come! Don't let it get you again. Remember we agreed to spend this evening just as we always did before—just as we always did. I'm doing it, I've been playing cards and joking.

DR. GAUNT—*(Looks at him with a rueful laugh.)*—Yes!

FINDLEY—But I can't joke all alone. Nobody can be light-hearted and jolly with everybody else in the house sniffling around.—*(Findley turns, sees Douglas, who has entered door L. 2nd crosses stage, as if to exit door right*

2nd. To Douglas—hotly.)—Now what the devil is the matter with you?—*(Douglas stops right center.)*

DOUGLAS—The door bell, sir. The Judge, I think. *(Douglas opens door R. 2nd entrance, leaving it open, and exits into hall, as if to open the outside door for the Judge.)*

FINDLEY—Jimmy is back from the police station.—*(Crosses back to table left, picks up medical journal.)*—Come now, don't let him see how you're feeling.

DR. GAUNT—You mean how we're feeling.

FINDLEY—I mean how you're feeling—I feel all right!—*(Grabs up medical journal and pressing it into Doctor's hand)*—Here, Buttercup, take your damned old medical journal and smile at that!—*(Quickly scrambles back into his seat and begins to play solitaire furiously.)*—Now, here—for God's sake try to smile!—*(Dr. Gaunt pretends to read. Dr. starts humming the Highland fling. Findley starts whistling as before, now a trifle louder—Enters Douglas in reception hall, followed by Judge Trumbull. Judge hands hat to Douglas, and Douglas assists him in removing coat and muffler. Douglas exits with same. Judge enters door R. 2nd entrance, sees Findley and Doctor and —starts dancing the Highland Fling singing ta, ta, ta, etc. —Findley and the Dr. stop suddenly and look at the Judge in utter horror—after a pause—as if nothing had happened walks up center and then down R.C.V*

DR. GAUNT—Any news?

JUDGE—*(Trying to speak cheerfully.)*—No, Poole hadn't put in an appearance or made a report. They're to call me up the minute they hear from him. You haven't heard anything here?

DR. GAUNT—No, nothing.

FINDLEY—No, and we don't want to.—*(Enters Douglas door R. 2nd, crosses down to the R. of the Judge.)* Why don't you drop it, Jimmy? There's nothing we can do.

JUDGE—I want to know how Sidney knew that man. I must know that.

DOUGLAS—*(Solicitiously.)*—Won't you have your dressing gown and slippers, sir?

JUDGE—No, I may go out again later. Tell Thomas to keep the car here.

DOUGLAS—Yes, sir.—*(Bows, crosses upstage to Sidney's writing desk speaking at the same time.)*—Saunders says this is to go to the attic.—*(Picks up Sidney's*

writing desk and exits door right 2nd entrance with desk. Judge comes to C. table, picks up pearls where Findley has laid them; Dr. Gaunt and Findley watching him, then puts them down, crosses down right to large arm chair.)

DR. GAUNT—*(Who with Findley have been watching Douglas' exit.)*—Think, boys, she left us only an hour ago, and already everything of hers has disappeared.—*(Findley tries to stop Doctor talking on the subject, making frantic signals and pantomime. Judge has placed pearls upon centre table, walks to settee right C., and sits. (Findley whistles; Dr. starts being gay again.)*

FINDLEY—Have a drink, Jimmy.

JUDGE—*(In cheerful tone.)*—No, thanks.—*(Awkward silence.)*

FINDLEY—*(Disgusted.)*—Oh, what the—

DR. GAUNT—*(Breaking silence.)*—What do you think, Jimmy, Gray wanted to get up and dress, so he could bring us our apples and hot water.—*(Dr. laughs heartily.)*

FINDLEY—Yes, what do you think of that, Jimmy? Ha, ha.—*(Laughs very loudly—suddenly stop. Judge smiles.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(After pause.)*—And Saunders has given notice.—*(Laughs.)*

JUDGE—*(Is dismayed. Stops smiling suddenly. Rises crosses to center right to Findley—Findley laughing hard again.)*

FINDLEY—Yes, old Saunders came in here—ha, ha—*(See Judge's grave face.)*—Oh, I feel rotten!

JUDGE—Yes, I know, Teddy.

FINDLEY—*(Very miserable)*—Well, I always feel rotten Saturday night. Next day is Sunday—can't go to the office, makes you blue.

JUDGE—Yes, but this is Thursday, Teddy.—*(Crossing behind Findley to left center—down stage.)*

FINDLEY—Oh—

DR. GAUNT—*(Rising throws down medical journal on table left.)*—Yes, this is Thursday, Teddy!—*(Starts laughing.)*

FINDLEY—Oh, come from behind your mask, Buttercup.—*(Findley rises, comes down center.)*

JUDGE—*(Who is left center—Dr. Gaunt crosses to him with back to audience.)*—Oh, what's the use of our pretending, we're not deceiving anybody.

DR. GAUNT—*(Putting hand on his shoulder.)*—Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy.—*(They form a group, Judge with left arm on Doctor's shoulder; right one on Findley's; Findley with arm about Judge.)*

JUDGE—Boys, we're nothing but children looking out of windows.

DR. GAUNT—Cheer up, Jimmy. At least we've got each other.

FINDLEY—That's right—*(About to curse—looks sees Sidney's glass jar.)*—By Gosh—

DR. GAUNT—After all the love of woman is an unstable thing and for the most part founded on selfishness and I believe that—

FINDLEY—Are you beginning a speech?

DR. GAUNT—No, Teddy, I just want to say—

FINDLEY—I know—you always just want to say—and the next thing we know it's bedtime.

JUDGE—Don't Teddy, go on Dick.

FINDLEY—Hum—all right, go on.

DR. GAUNT—Don't worry I am going. We three old fossils have formed a triumpvirate that has stood the test through many a storm.

FINDLEY—Now you're saying something.

DR. GAUNT—And we're going on this way to the very last trump, by gad—three guardsmen to the end—one for all—

DR., JUDGE, FINDLEY—*(Together)*—And all for one.—*(Raising hands together as if they have swords pointing upwards.)*

FINDLEY—And from now on we're through with women.

DR. GAUNT—Yes, forever.—*(Dr. crosses to left 1st entrance, followed by Judge—Findley crosses to right. Enters Douglas door left 2nd entrance—going to phone picks it up.)*

DOUGLAS—The telephone, gentlemen.

DR. GAUNT—Is it about Sidney? Let me have that, Douglas.

JUDGE—What does she say? Let me have it—what does she say?

FINDLEY—Who is it Douglas? Is it from Sidney? Tell me Douglas what does she say?—*(All three at the same time clamoring about Douglas—very excited fighting for the 'phone.)* *(Together)*

FINDLEY—Who is it, Douglas?

DOUGLAS—A reporter, sir.—*(All with an exclamation of disgust, return to their former positions; Findley crosses and sits in large arm-chair left.)*

FINDLEY—Tell them there's no one here.

JUDGE—*(Sitting dejectedly thinking of Sidney.)*—No one here.—*(Douglas exits, door left, center exit, as if to speak in phone off stage. The Three Wise Fools gradually become occupied with their own thoughts. Dr. takes chair which is right of table left, places it left of table center, sits.)*

DR. GAUNT—No one here.—*(Staring front dejectedly—after pause Gordon enters—door right 2nd pauses takes in situation, takes chair from up right, brings chair down stage, sits right of C.—after pause Findley looks down, sees Gordon's feet who is sitting on a line with Findley, then looks up an sees Gordon, turns back staring front, turns looks at Gordon again.)*

FINDLEY—*(After a long pause)*—Huh! So—so you've come to your senses have you?—*(Judge and Dr. look toward Gordon.)*

GORDON—Yes, sir.

FINDLEY—Thought it was best to come back here?

GORDON—Yes, sir.

FINDLEY—*(With a grunt)*—All right. What have you come back for?—*(Pause).*

GORDON—To see if you three had come to your senses.—*(Pause.)*—Have you?—*(Dr. and Judge look at Gordon.)*

FINDLEY—No! If we had we wouldn't let you in the house after what you've said.

GORDON—I know. I lost my temper. But I'm sorry for what I said. I meant every word of it.—*(Look from Three Wise Men.)*—But I'm sorry I said it.

FINDLEY—*(Sarcastically)*—Did you come back here to tell us that?

GORDON—I came back to talk it over.

FINDLEY—*(Pause)*—Well the subject is closed.

GORDON—Then I'm going to open it again.—*(Judge moves, Gordon rises, crosses to table center.)*—I want to know this—if I could prove to you three that Sidney's innocent of any wrong doing whether you would agree not to make any charge against her.—*(They all look at him in great surprise.)*

FINDLEY—Then you've not come to your senses?—*(Gordon crosses to Findley who is right, still sitting.)*

GORDON—Why haven't I?

FINDLEY—Not if you still believe she's innocent.

GORDON—Believe she's innocent?—*(Crossing back to his position right of table center—facing audience.)*—I know she's innocent.—*(All jump up and surround him.)*

FINDLEY—Tell us what you mean, Gordon?

JUDGE—Have you found any new *(Together)* evidence?

DOCTOR—What is it you've heard?

FINDLEY—How do you know?—*(Pause.)*

GORDON—I've looked into her eyes.—*(All groan and resume their seats.)*

FINDLEY—My God!—*(Sits down disgusted.)*

FINDLEY—*(After a pause)*—Then you've seen her, have you?

GORDON—Not since you drove her away.

FINDLEY—*(Losing his temper)*—Now I won't stand

GORDON—*(Who is right center of table.)*—All right, sir. Not since she left then—I want to tell you something, Uncle, and I'd like to have Dr. Gaunt and the Judge hear it too—*(All look at Gordon)*—I don't know whether any of you will be able to understand what I mean, but I love Sidney.

JUDGE—*(Quietly)*—Why should you think that's hard for us to understand, Gordon?

GORDON—Why you all seemed so darned surprised—*(Gordon crosses to left to Judge.)*—just because I don't jump at the conclusion that Sidney's guilty of some horrible crime.

JUDGE—Gordon, you can't imagine that we wanted to distrust Sidney; why we love her too.

GORDON—Why, Judge, I don't think you know what love means.—*(Bus. of all three looking at Gordon.)*

JUDGE—Well, perhaps you can tell us what it means, Gordon.

GORDON—I can tell you what it means to me. It means there isn't any use of anything without Sidney. If I've got to lose her I don't care what happens; the whole world just stops for me—that's all. Then there's another thing about it that's worse still—much worse.—*(Turns faces Findley and Doctor.)*—Sidney's in trouble, whether

she's innocent or guilty, or good or bad, or whatever she is she's in trouble and this is a hell of a time to stop and bother about whether she's guilty or not..

JUDGE—*(Rises)*—Gordon, I'm afraid I admire you and care more for you at this moment than I ever did before, and I'm very certain that I envy you.

GORDON—Why is it, sir, that you all want to give Sidney the worst of it?

FINDLEY—*(Rises, after regarding Gordon in astonishment for a moment.)*—You mean to say you think we've been giving Sidney the worst of it.

GORDON—*(Crossing center to Findley)*—I do, yes.

FINDLEY—Perhaps you can explain how.

GORDON—Well, I can try. You say a criminal came into the house to kill the Judge.

FINDLEY—Yes.

GORDON—Well, why didn't he do it?

FINDLEY—Because he was alarmed by the police.

GORDON—Well, who alarmed the police?

FINDLEY—I don't know.

GORDON—Well, if you cared for Sidney as much as I do, you'd have found out. They were alarmed by a police whistle?

FINDLEY—What?—*(Dr. Rises.)*

GORDON—Someone in the house blew a police whistle.

FINDLEY—How do you know?

GORDON—Poole told me. Now none of the servants blew it. I've asked them all. And unless one of you three did, it must have been Sidney. Why, Judge, you owe your life to Sidney, that's what I think.—*(Crosses to Judge.)*

DR. GAUNT—Why, this is amazing, Gordon.

GORDON—Then there's another thing—you surely wouldn't want to have Sidney arrested unless she done something wrong. Now what do you think she's done? It's certain she didn't want to rob you. She even left the pearls here that you gave her. It's certain she didn't want to do you any injury, because she alarmed the police, and there was no reason for her to do you any wrong. No motive.—*(Crossing back to Findley, who is center right.)* Can't you see that, Uncle?

FINDLEY—*(Penitently—humbly—hands on Gordon's shoulder)*—Gordon, is there anything you want us to do for you?

GORDON—*(Quickly)*—Yes, sir, I don't want you to make any charges against her, so that they won't take her to jail.

JUDGE—I'm afraid that won't make any difference if Poole finds her.

GORDON—*(Crossing to left—to Judge.)*—Why, Poole won't have her arrested unless you prefer charges against her.

JUDGE—What?

GORDON—Poole believes that she is innocent; he's ready to swear to it.

JUDGE—What makes you think that?

GORDON—Because I had a heart to heart talk with him, and I made him understand that if Sidney doesn't see the inside of a jail he's going to be a very rich man. *(Pause—Findley crosses up stage and down.)*

FINDLEY—Ah, ha—

GORDON—At first he thought he couldn't let her go, but after—*(hesitates)*—after we came to an understanding he said he'd have her brought here, and if you three refuse to accuse her he would let her go.

JUDGE—Did you say you hadn't seen Sidney?

GORDON—No, sir, I wanted to go with Poole but when I found her fate was up to you gentlemen I thought it was best to come back and talk to you.

JUDGE—Well you needn't worry about us, Gordon, we'll do everything we can for her.

DR. GAUNT—Yes, everything, Gordon.

GORDON—*(With great relief)*—You're a brick, sir. You're all bricks—even uncle.—*(Enter Douglas door R.C.)*

DOUGLAS—Mr. Poole—*(All turn quickly. Poole enters—all three men crowd about him—Poole crosses down right center—Douglas exits door R. 2nd.)*

JUDGE—Have you found her?

DR. GAUNT—Did you bring her with you? *(Together.)*

FINDLEY—Where is she?

POOLE—She's outside in the car.

FINDLEY—What car?

POOLE—*(Indicating Gordon)*—This gentleman's; he insisted upon my using it. Swellest ride I ever had, sir.

FINDLEY—Well, why the devil did you leave her outside?

POOLE—She doesn't want to come in.—*(They look at him for a moment.)*

GORDON—No wonder.

POOLE—*(Crossing to Gordon who is left center.)*—Your orders were, sir, that I wasn't to force her to do anything.—*(To Gordon.)*—Could you get them to agree not to prefer any charges, sir?

FINDLEY—*(Coming up to him hotly)*—Well, has anyone around here preferred charges?

POOLE—*(Crossing to R.C. looking at him in surprise)* Why I thought—

FINDLEY—Oh, you thought—well we'd have less trouble around here if you'd stop thinking. Now we're not making any charges and have no idea of making any charges. Is that clear?

POOLE—Yes, sir.

FINDLEY—Well, then.—*(Goes upstage to C. Douglas enters—removes chair up to C. L. of D.)*

DOUGLAS—*(To Poole.)*—One of your men, sir.—*(Poole turns up).*

CLANCEY—*(Enters)*—We brought him over here, chief.

POOLE—Brought who over here?

CLANCEY—*(Surprised.)*—Benny the Duck.

POOLE—What the devil did you do that for?

CLANCEY—Wasn't those your orders?

POOLE—My orders—no.

CLANCEY—Well, that's what Grogan told us; to report here with the prisoner, he said.

POOLE—No—no, what I told Grogan was about the young lady—if they got her before I arrived. I was going to bring her here?

CLANCEY—Well, he didn't tell me that.

GORDON—*(X. to R.C.)*—Can't you bring that fellow in here, Poole?

POOLE—Why, yes, sir. Certainly, anything you say. Go get him, Clancey.—*(Signals Clancey who exits.)*

GORDON—*(To Three Men)*—Perhaps we can get something out of him so that we could go out and apologize to Sidney. She'd want to come in then. Douglas, tell Saunders that Miss Sidney—*(Smile from Douglas)* is outside in my car and have her go out and keep her company?

DOUGLAS—*(Face lighting up.)*—Yes, sir.—*(Exit quickly D.R. in F. Clancey and Policeman enter with Benny between them. Gordon and the three men turn and look at him curiously.)*

POOLE—*(Going up and taking Benny's arm)*—All right—I've got him.—*(Clancey and Policeman exit. Poole takes Benny down stage.)*—Come over here, Benny.

BENNY—What are you bringing me here for?

POOLE—These gentlemen want to know what you did when you came here tonight.

BENNY—You won't get nothin' out of me.—*(Suddenly sees the Judge.)*—That's him—there's the—*(tries to go for the Judge—a general movement.)*

POOLE—*(Tightening his hold on him.)*—None of that—that won't get you anything. Now how'd you make a get-away? Come on, come across.

BENNY—No, not me—no not a word. You got me all right, but I'm the only one you got, and you can't get me to spill anything—I'm no squealer, do you hear?—*(He has worked himself up to a frenzy and shouts the last line to Poole.)*

DR. GAUNT—Now just a moment—let me look at this man.—*(Goes to Benny, who is down R. 1 E.)*—It's all right, Benny, I'm a doctor.

BENNY—Huh!

DR. GAUNT—That's better—just look at me—don't be afraid. We want to help you if we can—that's it—just look at me a minute.—*(Lifts his right eyelid.)*—You're not as strong as you were.

BENNY—I'm strong enough.

DR. GAUNT—Doesn't it hurt you there, Benny—sometimes?—*(Touches the back of his neck. Benny winces.)*

BENNY—Yes, it does.

DR. GAUNT—Just as I thought. This man is sick, Poole, he ought to be in a hospital!

BENNY—No, I'm all right.

DR. GAUNT—Now, Benny, I'm going to see if I can help you. We don't want you to say anything that would incriminate anyone else, we just want you to tell us why you broke into this house.

BENNY—*(Savagely.)*—I'll tell you that. It was to get him.—*(Points to Judge.)*—That's why I did.

DR. GAUNT—Now, now. You didn't know anyone else in this house?

BENNY—No.

DR. GAUNT—And you didn't see anyone in here you knew?

BENNY—*(Glancing about frightened)*—No.—*(Douglas enters hall door, comes to Gordon.)*

DOUGLAS—Saunders is bringing Miss Sidney in, sir.

FINDLEY—Ah Sidney!

BENNY—*(Starts about wildly.)*—Take me out of here.—*(Imploringly to Dr. Gaunt.)*—Make them take me out of here, will you? I'll talk to you if you will. I'll tell you everything I can.

GORDON—*(Urgently.)*—Do doctor, please.—*(Goes to Douglas. Dr. Gaunt goes quickly to dining-room door.)*

DR. GAUNT—*(Speaking.)*—Bring him in here, Poole.

POOLE—*(Going up quickly with Benny exits, followed by Dr. Gaunt.)*

GORDON—*(Turns to Douglas)*—Douglas, ask Miss Sidney if I may see her for a moment. Tell her it's most important.

DOUGLAS—Yes, sir.—*(Exits in hallway, closing door.)*

GORDON—Uncle, will you and the Judge go in too?

FINDLEY—What? Oh! Come on, Jimmy.—*(Exit Findley—closing both doors with an inquisitive ear. Gordon crosses to fireplace, his hands clenched—walks up and down in front of the fireplace keeping his eye on the hall-door R. which Douglas re-opens slowly and Sidney stands on the threshhold—Douglas closes door.)*

SIDNEY—You wanted to see me?

GORDON—*(Goes center below table.)*—Yes, I do.

SIDNEY—*(Closes door and goes slowly to him—she stands facing him. Gordon stands motionless looking into her eyes. After a pause—beginning a sentence.)*—You—you've heard about it—*(She can't continue.)*

GORDON—Yes—

SIDNEY—Why did you want to see me?

GORDON—Sidney—I want to ask you just one question?

SIDNEY—*(Turning front and shaking her head.)*—I can't—what is the question?

GORDON—Will you marry me?

SIDNEY—*(After a long pause—she stands perfectly motionless, looking at him, then, her face lights up a little, and she raises her hands slightly and then lets them fall to her sides; she then speaks in a little surprised tone.)*—Why—

GORDON—Because I love you and want you to be my wife.

SIDNEY—Don't you know that I wouldn't—

GORDON—Sidney.

SIDNEY—Gordon, I can't tell you what this means for you to ask me to—You said tonight that you knew that I loved you—I do—but just think you're asking a woman to marry you who's under arrest.

GORDON—Don't talk that way, Sidney.

SIDNEY—But it's true.

GORDON—But it isn't—that's all been settled. And they realize now they made a terrible mistake.

SIDNEY—You mean that I am free.

GORDON—Of course.

SIDNEY—Gordon, Mr. Poole told me that you had him bring me here and that you were trying to—

GORDON—Don't speak of it, Sidney.

SIDNEY—*(Crosses to L.C.)*—I can't thank you. There aren't any words. I can only love you, and say good-bye.

GORDON—*(Crossing to her)*—But where are you going?

SIDNEY—*(Crossing up L.C. towards stairs)*—Please don't ask me that. I've got something to do that I can't tell anyone about.

GORDON—But you can tell me, I wouldn't let anyone know—I wouldn't breathe it to a soul.

SIDNEY—You wouldn't?

GORDON—No, and I'm sure you're doing the right thing, Sidney. I know I would be doing exactly the same thing myself if I only knew what the devil it was.—*(Douglas knocks at door R. 2nd entrance, entering immediately).*

DOUGLAS—Excuse me, sir, but there's a man here to see Mr. Poole, he says it's very urgent.

GORDON—He's in there.—*(Points to dining room. Douglas goes to dining room door—opens it—showing all three men at the door in listening attitude. Gordon crosses to door left 2nd entrance, at entrance of Findley, Gordon*

confused, exits hurriedly, followed by Sidney. Douglas steps back apologetically. Judge and Doctor closes door quickly. Bus. between Douglas and Findley. Findley tumbles into the room, turns quickly to go out, but the Doctor and the Judge have quickly closed the doors in his face. Sidney and Gordon have gone out door L.—he turns finding them gone—then turning R. discovers Douglas standing ill at ease.)

FINDLEY—*(Bursting with wrath as he finds a victim)*—What the hell do you mean opening that door without knocking? Don't you know how to knock at a door. Open the door like that and a man standing right there. What do you want anyway?

DOUGLAS—A man to see Mr. Poole, sir.

FINDLEY—One of his men?

DOUGLAS—I don't know, sir.

FINDLEY—Well, tell him to come in here.

DOUGLAS—Yes, sir.—*(Douglas opens door R. 2nd entrance, holds it open, for Crawshay to enter, as Crawshay enters, Douglas closes door and exits. Crawshay enters, looking about, comes down right center. Findley turns and sees him. Findley crossing to Crawshay, who is R.C.)*

FINDLEY—I believe you wanted to—*(Crosses in front of table center. As Crawshay recognizes Findley he turns front. Findley half recognizes Crawshay, stops speaking; goes over to him; he comes down close in order to see his face.)*—John Crawshay—don't you remember me, Jack?

CRAWSHAY—Yes, I'm looking for a man named Poole.—*(Pause.)*—He's a detective. They told me he's in here.

FINDLEY—What do you want with Poole?

CRAWSHAY—There's a reward out for me, and I want him to get it. I thought if he did—

FINDLEY—You mean you're giving yourself up. Now see here—you escaped from prison with Benny the Duck.

CRAWSHAY—Yes.

FINDLEY—I want you to tell me something, Jack. Do you know a girl named Sidney Fairchild?

CRAWSHAY—That's why I'm here.

FINDLEY—*(Quickly)*—Tell me what you know about her.

CRAWSHAY—I've heard she's in the hands of the police, and I know she's innocent. I brought all this trouble on her, and she's innocent.

FINDLEY—*(Pause.)*—How did you come to know her?

CRAWSHAY—In Atlanta. They were showing her through the prison, and she stopped and talked with me.

FINDLEY—And did she talk to Benny the Duck, too?

CRAWSHAY—Yes; his cell was next to mine, and then she came again; she came as often as they'd allow it until we got away.

FINDLEY—And Sidney knew you were going to escape?

CRAWSHAY—No, we didn't know it ourselves until that night when the chance came.

FINDLEY—Then how did she find you were in New York?

CRAWSHAY—Benny sent her word. And then she came here and she's been helping us ever since. Why we'd have starved if it hadn't been for her. I wish to God we had now. Why she—oh, but I'm wasting time. Won't you let me see Mr. Poole.

FINDLEY—You don't need to see him now, Jack.

CRAWSHAY—What do you mean? Tell me what you mean.

FINDLEY—I mean Sidney's free and none of the police are going to arrest her or come near her, I can promise you that.

CRAWSHAY—*(With great relief.)*—Thank God!

FINDLEY—But why didn't she tell us.—*(Cross to R. corner.)*—Why didn't she confide in us.

CRAWSHAY—How could she—the poor girl knew if she told you it would be your duty to notify the authorities and that you would be held criminally responsible if you didn't.

FINDLEY—That's true.

CRAWSHAY—No, don't hold that against her.

FINDLEY—Hold it against her, I'm not holding anything against her. Why I'm going to have her marry my nephew. You don't think I'd do that if I held anything against her, do you?

CRAWSHAY—Your nephew? The one she calls Gordon?

FINDLEY—That's the one. And I can tell you that he's the—er—well never mind that. Jack, I never did believe you were guilty, never and that's a fact. Was I right?

CRAWSHAY—Yes, I was not guilty. But that's over long ago. I was convicted; the evidence was conclusive; there were the notes with my endorsement. I was helpless, why I—*(Dining-room door opens, Poole enters with Benny. Dr. and Judge following them, as they come on. Crawshay pushes Findley firmly away and steps up to Poole quickly—who has advanced right centre.)*

BENNY—*(Seeing Crawshay for the first time, crosses down right center. Findley is right corner.)*—Governor!

CRAWSHAY—*(Crossing to right center.)*—Is your name Poole?

POOLE—*(Who is center right—after glance at Benny.)*—That's my name.

CRAWSHAY—I am John Crawshay, and I'm ready to go with you!

BENNY—Oh, Governor, what are you doing? You're crazy. They couldn't have got you. I didn't squeal, and she's all right. They've got nothing on her at all; they told me so.

CRAWSHAY—*(Quickly)*—Stop, Bennie, don't say don't say any more.

BENNY—Yes, I will, I'll say everything now. It will kill her if you are sent up again, it will kill her.

DR. GAUNT—What do you mean, Benny?

BENNY—I'll tell you what I mean. He's her father, Doc.

CRAWSHAY—Benny—

BENNY—Oh, you can't stop me now. He's her father, and it will kill her if he goes back.

POOLE—*(Takes Benny by arm.)*—That will do, Benny.

BENNY—*(Hesitating.)*—No, no, wait a minute, will you lend me your pencil, Doc.

DR. GAUNT—*(Taking fountain pen from his pocket)* Will this do?

BENNY—Yes, that's better. Can I sit down there a minute?—*(Indicates card table.)*

DR. GUANT—*(Places chair behind table center.)*—All right, Poole.—*(Signals Poole to allow Benny to sit at card table centre. Benny takes pen, pauses, thinking hard*

for a mament then picks up one of the playing cards, makes a few marks on it, throws it away; takes another card and writes for a moment very slowly; all watch him curiously; he finishes writing, rises, hands pen to Doctor and indicating Crawshay, speaks.)

BENNY—Show him that, will you?—*(He hands the Doctor the card: Dr. looks at the card blankly, crosses to right of center and hands it to Crawshay, who glances at it; starts slightly, then his face slowly expresses amazement; after a pause.)*

FINDLEY—What is it, Jack?

CRAWSHAY—*(In low tone, handing card to Findley.)*—My signature.

POOLE—*(Who has taken card and looked at it.)*—Well, I'm damned.

BENNY—Now you know it all, Governor, now you know what I've been keeping from you ever since I first met you in the pen.

FINDLEY—*(Crossing to Benny, right center.)*—Yes, it was me.—*(Gordon enters, from library.)*

GORDON—Oh, I say, Uncle—*(Findley crosses up R.C. Findley sees Gordon, crosses up to stairs left.)*

FINDLEY—Just a minute, Gordon.—*(Gordon closes library door quietly, stands staring at them.)*—Better go in the hall, Dick.

GORDON—*(Off stage.)*—Wait Sidney.—*(Gordon exit through library. Dr. Gaunt goes to hall door and opens it. Findley comes to Crawshay.)*

DR. GAUNT—Will you step out here, Poole?—*(Findley crosses to window right, then up to center right.)*

FINDLEY—*(To Crawshay.)*—She's in there.—*(Exit Benny, followed by Poole. Door right 2nd entrance.)*

CRAWSHAY—Don't let her see Benny and me if you can help it, please.

JUDGE—*(Crossing from center to right center to Crawshay—offers hand.)*—Mr. Crawshay, I am Judge Trumbull.

CRAWSHAY—*(Bus. of shaking hands.)*—Yes!

JUDGE—I want you to feel that I'm entirely at your service, and I assure you that your case will be reopened at once.—*(Sees that Poole has made an exit.)*—Oh, Mr. Poole—*(Exit door right 2nd entrance. Re-enter Gordon from library left 3rd entrance.)*

GORDON—Oh, Uncle.

CRAWSHAY—*(Crosses up and starts for right U.E.; turns sees Gordon—to Findley.)*—Teddy, is that Gordon?

FINDLEY—*(Proudly.)*—Yes, that's Gordon.—*(Crawshay looked at Gordon fixedly for a moment, then smiles and suddenly exits out the hall door, right 2nd entrance. Gordon comes down stairs from library to center.)*

GORDON—Wh—who's that, Uncle?—*(Findley crosses down center.)*

FINDLEY—An escaped convict named John Crawshay.—*(Pause—look.)*

GORDON—*(Astonished.)*—Crawshay, what's he doing here?

FINDLEY—He's given himself over to the police?

GORDON—*(Looks at his uncle dumbfounded—speaks deliberately.)*—Good heavens.

FINDLEY—What's the matter?

GORDON—I can't tell you; I've given my word I wouldn't.

FINDLEY—You mean you can't tell me he is Sidney's father?

GORDON—How did you know?

FINDLEY—You're not the only one around here who can find out things.

GORDON—What can I say to Sidney, Uncle? How can I break the news to her.

FINDLEY—I'm surprised that such a brilliant fellow as you are, would come to me for any advice!

GORDON—Oh, don't joke about it, uncle? If you knew how that girl has been trying—what she's been doing—and there isn't anybody in the world like her. It's awful to have to tell her the police have got him.—*(Crosses upstage left center—crosses down stage left center.)*—It's awful.

FINDLEY—Well, how would you like to tell her that he's not guilty? And that he'll be a free man before the month is out.

GORDON—Oh, I'd be willing to die to tell her that.

FINDLEY—Go do it then. I mean tell her—never mind about dying just yet.

GORDON—You mean it? You really mean it?

FINDLEY—Every word of it. We've just had positive proof and the Judge has taken his case and is out there going over it with him now. And if you don't know what that means, I do.

GORDON—*(With a little sob.)*—Uncle—*(He dives for his uncle and hugs him violently—Findley is greatly surprised and embarrassed—is just about to embrace Gordon.)*

FINDLEY—Here, what the hell are you doing.

GORDON—*(Recoiling from him, very confused.)*—Damned if I know.—*(Exit quickly door left, second entrance.)*—Oh, Sidney, Sidney—*(Enters Judge and Dr. Gaunt. Judge crosses to Findley who has crossed to left center; Dr. follows him; Findley sees them and subsides).*

FINDLEY—What have you done, Jimmy?

JUDGE—*(Crossing to Findley.)*—He's gone with Poole. It will only be a matter of a few days.

DR. GAUNT—Yes, that's all and we're all going to take a long—*(suddenly sobering.)*

FINDLEY—What's the matter?

DR. GAUNT—What are we going to say to Sidney?

FINDLEY—*(Dismayed.)*—Oh, my God.

DR. GAUNT—She ought to be told, of course.

FINDLEY—Don't worry—she's being told.

JUDGE—Where is she?

FINDLEY—In there.

JUDGE—*(Sitting on ottoman in front of table left—Findley sits on chair left of ottoman. Dr. takes chair and places it right of Judge—sits.)*—We ought to be ashamed of ourselves.

FINDLEY—We ought to be? You should be ashamed of yourself. It was all that damn buckle business.

DR. GAUNT—Jimmy, you should have had more sense.

JUDGE—Well it was your threatening her with the police. That's what did it.

DR. GAUNT—You scared her out of the house.—*(All three rise in argument. Gordon enters door left 2nd, sees them in argument, beckons to Sidney to enter—she does so—rushes down to cease argument.)*

FINDLEY—I scared her out of the house? The trouble? It was your ruts and buttercups that drove her out of the house!

DR. GAUNT—I was the only one that was good to that girl.—*(Ad lib by three wise men until Sidney comes down and places arms about all of them—all together).*

ALL—Sidney!—*(They resume their seats. Sidney kneels with back to audience.)*

DR. GAUNT—Everything is all right, Sidney.

FINDLEY—Yes, your father will be with you again soon.

DR. GAUNT—He'll be with us all again soon.

JUDGE—And you won't worry, Sidney, and just leave everything to me?—*(She rises, creeps into Judge's lap, she hugs him.)*—That's right.

DR. GAUNT—And you're going to forgive us, Sidney?

SIDNEY—*(Looking at the three of them.)*—Forgive you?

DR. GAUNT—Yes, we didn't mean any harm. We're just three humiliated old fools.

SIDNEY—*(Glancing at Dr., placing hand upon his head.)*—But you're not old—no—really you're not.

FINDLEY—But you don't contradict us about being fools.

GORDON—*(Crosses down from door left 2nd entrance to left 1st entrance with back to audience watching Sidney: Judge sees him.)*

JUDGE—And you're going to forgive us too, Gordon?

GORDON—Not if you keep Sidney on your lap much longer.—*(He comes to trio, extends his hand and takes Sidney to fireplace.)*—I say, can't we celebrate some way.

DR. GAUNT—*(Clapping his hands gaily rises—takes chair placing it right centre of table.)*—Celebrate! that's the thing to do.—*(Findley crosses down left corner back to audience—Judge is left center back to audience. Bell rings off stage left centre one stroke. Folding door opens center, Gray enters with big bandage around his head; he is in dressing gown carrying tray—on which are three tall tumblers of hot water—and three large apples on plates.)* Gray—

GRAY—*(Solemnly)*—It's bed time, gentlemen.

JUDGE—He comes like fate to put us to bed.—*(Takes his chair and places it up left of center door.)*

GRAY—*(is left center.)*—Your apples and hot water.

DR. GAUNT—*(Throwing up his hands.)*—I surrender, Teddy. Ha, ha—*(Laughs ruefully.)*—We can't escape our ruts.—*(Goes over and takes his glass and apple and crosses upstairs to the library door.)*

JUDGE—*(Who comes down left of Grey, takes his apple and hot water.)*—We don't want to escape them, only there was something lacking before.—*(Indicating Sid-*

ney and Gordon, crosses up following Dr., stands on first step of stairs leading to library.)

FINDLEY—*(Crosses up to Gray, takes his cup of hot water and apple ,faces Sidney and Gordon. Gordon in the meantime has taken pearl necklace from his pocket and fastens about Sidney's neck.)*—By jove that's so, Dick. We can stick to our ruts and at the same time we can roll among your buttercups.—*(The Three Wise Fools start humming the March song from "Faust"; they go up the stairs waving their apples and tumblers to the young lovers, singing their soldier chorus. Grey starts to exit through sliding doors center. Gordon and Sidney smile at them as they go through the door.)*

CURTAIN.

PROPERTY LIST OF "THREE WISE FOOLS."
ACT ONE.

1 small green covered card table.

(On table, a double pack of miniature playing cards, one large pack of playing cards, one box safety matches, one silver ash tray.)

1 cigar for Mr. Findley.

1 small stand R. of C.

1 chair behind table C.

1 settee R.I.E.

1 sofa L.I.E.

1 table, 4 ft. 6 inches, set left.

(On table, medical journals, one standing lamp, 10 newspapers, four magazines, one cigarette box, one ash tray.)

1 desk telephone on table L.

1 family album in same.

1 table and 4 chairs in dining room, off C. arch.

(On table, white table spread, fern dish in C.)

(OFF STAGE LEFT FOR GRAY.)

1 small carafe of water.

1 medicine bottle with cork.

1 graduating glass.

1 glass spoon.

1 tray.

(OFF STAGE FOR MRS. SAUNDERS LEFT)

2 small note books.

(OFF STAGE FOR GRAY RIGHT)

1 tray with coffee pot, 2 cups, 2 saucers, 2 spoons and two lumps of sugar on each saucer.

(OFF STAGE R.)

1 silver server with card on same (for Gray.)

1 Police whistle (for Poole).

1 chain of keys on ring and hook (for Findley.)

1 official envelope and letter (for Findley.)

1 black letter wallet for letter—for Findley.

1 picture of Three Old Men in album.

4 pictures of a lady in album.

1 letter with envelope—letter written on wrapping paper, also Will (for the Judge.)

1 cheap hand-bag.

1 old dress suit case.
1 carpet down in dining room, also on stage.
1 set of curtains on poles and rings—window R.
1 kitchen table off L., upper entrance, for side props.
1 kitchen table off R., upper entrance for side props.
2 candelabras on mantel L.I.E.
1 Police whistle (for Poole.)
1 chair R. of C. arch.
1 chair R.I.E., also 1 chair R. of D. R. 2 E.
3 apples, 3 mugs on plates on tray (for Gray).

ACT TWO.

1 ladies' writing desk up C. to R. between arch and D. in flat.

11 law books under desk.

1 typewriter (on desk.)

1 dainty Sheritan table C. downstage.

4 chairs about same C. downstage.

20 bouquets of flowers in 20 vases and pots.

1 paper (list) for Mrs. Saunders on table L.

1 Birthday cake on cake dish, candle on cake—off R. upper entrance.

1 cake knife on tray.

(OFF STAGE C. IN DINING ROOM—*Back Center.)*

1 Adams dining table.

4 dining chairs about same.

1 white table spread.

4 napkins on table.

4 plates, 4 knives, 4 forks.

NOTE:—The Prop's to dress table in dining room in Act 2nd, (Behind closed sliding doors are as follows.)

2 consol tables, R. and L. of window in dining room, silver tray on each.

4 napkins (opened as if used.)

4 candle sticks (glass) with candles in same, also 4 shades for same.

4 fancy cut glass tumblers (filled with water.)

4 fruit or ice cream dishes on glass saucers.

4 ice cream spoons (on same.)

1 gong or bar to strike at given cue (off L.U.E.)

1 muffled beater for same (for man who watches clock).

1 small fancy sugar on mantle, L. of clock.

1 tobacco jar (glass) half filled with tobacco (on mantle R. of clock.)

1 dark glass vase (fancy) filled with paper lighters also old briar pipe with same, R. of clock C. on mantle.

2 glass vases (with large bouquets of American Beauties in same upon mantle L.I.E.)

2 glass vases (with large bouquets of American Beauties in same upon book case R. of door R.)

(OFF STAGE R.U.E.)

1 bottle port wine.

4 glasses on tray (3 for Douglas.)

1 bunch of keys (for Clancey.)

1 tray with trick coffee pot on tray (for Douglas.)

1 pair of pearl beads in same (for Douglas.)

1 pair of pearl beads (for Gordon.)

4 cups, 4 saucers, 4 spoons, 1 coffee pot—off C.—to L. (for Douglas.)

12 white handkerchiefs (for Doctor, Findley and Judge.)

1 box of tobacco (for Doctor).

1 lorgnette (for Sidney).

1 fan (for Sidney).

1 bunch of orchids (for Sidney).

1 lady's wrist watch in case, wrapped in paper, rubber band about same (for Gordon).

1 heavy sand-bag—150 lbs.—on step-ladder, for effect, off R.U.E.

1 revolver (for Benny the Duck).

1 medicine case off R. of C. (for Douglas).

1 kitchen chair off stairway, L. of C. (for side props).

1 mirror hung off stairway L. of C. (for Sidney).

1 pair blue satin slippers (for Judge), buckles on same, off L. of C. up-stairs.

ACT ONE, TWO, THREE:

NOTE—(Wall or Interior decorations for set ... follows):

1 oil painting (to look as if it was Sidney's ... hanging over mantle L.I.E.)

1 oil painting (hanging in hall off R. of C.)

1 oil painting (hanging over D. R. of C.)

2 small old-fashioned pictures L. of D. R. in F.

1 picture containing wax wreath of flowers, L. i...

1 bell cord hanging L. of C. arch.

1 large bouquet of American Beauties, with long ... (for Douglas) for opening of Act 2nd.

2 large potted plants R. and L. of table down (... Act 2).

1 large potted plant on stand R. of C. arch (for A...

1 large potted plant on small table or stand (be ... door L. 2nd ... nd foot of stairs).

2 large bouquets of roses on table C.

1 large bouquet of pink roses on table L.—Act 2.

ACT THREE.

'AIRS C. OFF L. (FOR MRS. SAUNDERS):

ey's bag.

s-suit case.

edle and thread.

ing of pearls, separated (for Findley).

ite tumblers in holders (for Gray), off R.U.E.

ver tray, 3 napkins, 3 plates, 3 large red apples, f hot water, same as Act 1.

ndage (for Gray).

ge cigar (for Findley).

x matches on table C.

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